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The Greatest Games of All Time

Final Issue – 25 Years of NP History

Poster Inside!

DECEMBER 2012 V285
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NINTENDO POWER

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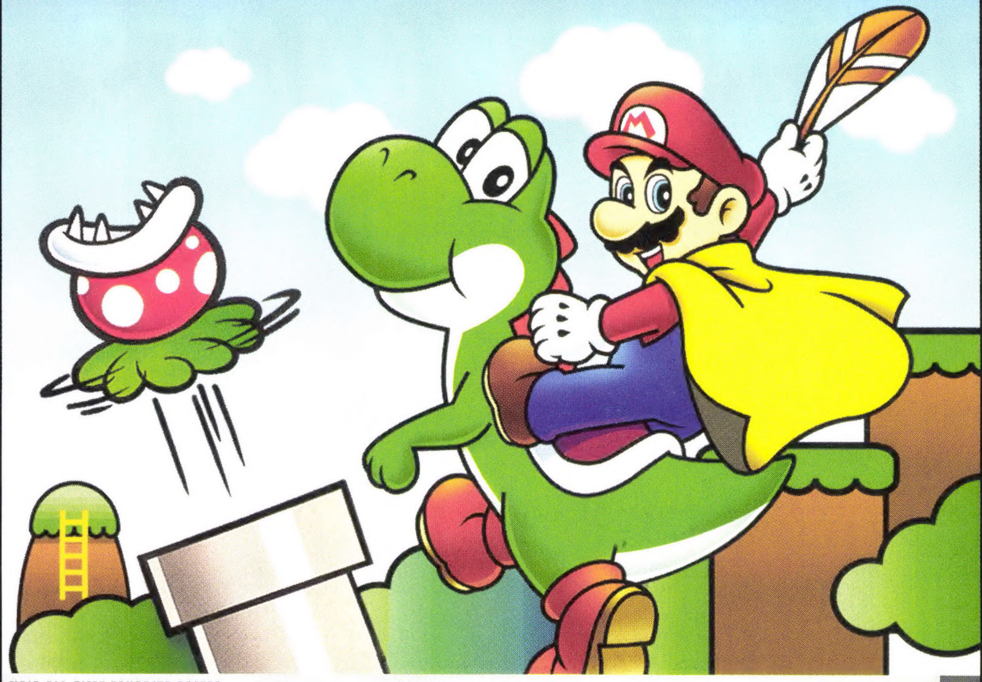

NP'S ALL-TIME FAVORITE GAMES 10

INTRODUCING THE NEW POWER
it's shiny, and it smells great!

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN
Will the real Spider-Man please get off the ceiling?

METROID PRIME HUNTERS
You don't need a pretty face to hunt galactic scum!

MADDEN NFL 2006
If it ain't broken, mess with it anyhow.

NINTENDO POWER

HUGE E3 PREVIEW SECTION!
ALL THE HITS FROM L.A.

KILLER 7 TOP TIPS!
SURVIVAL STRATEGIES TO DIE FOR

GAMES GET REEL
PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG
THE NEXT HARRY POTTER
THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

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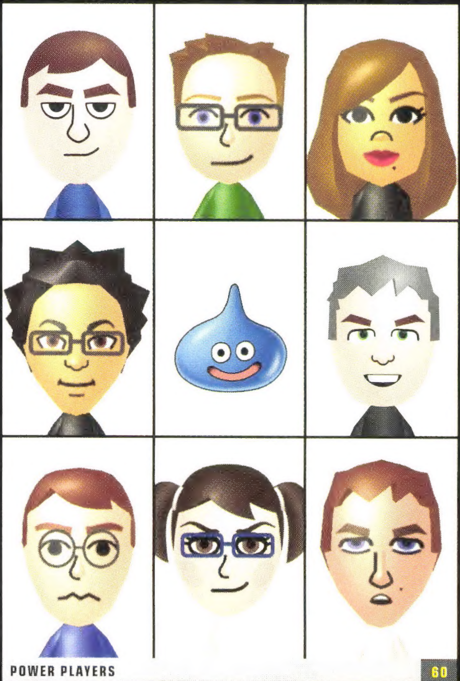
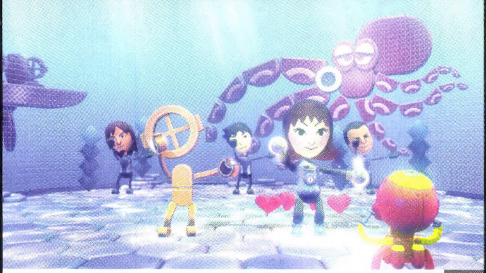
GREAT MOMENTS IN POWER 30



POWER PLAYERS 60



NINTENDO LAND 72

ZOMBIU 74

TWILIGHT SYMPHONY

Based on the work of Toru Minegishi, Asuka Ota and Koji Kondo from The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess

ZREO
ZELDA REORCHESTRATED
twilight-symphony.com

JOYPAD RECORDS
available on iTunes and JoypadRecords.com

KANTO SYMPHONY

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC FROM POKÉMON RED AND BLUE

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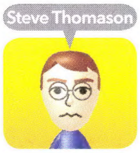
SKOTEIN

Pulse

End of an Era


Steve Thomason

This is the most difficult thing I've ever had to write. We all knew this was coming when it was announced a few months ago that the magazine would be ceasing publication, but that doesn't make it any easier. All of us have had an absolute blast working on Nintendo Power, and we feel honored and humbled by our readership—in my admittedly biased opinion, the greatest on the face of the planet. You guys have shown an incredible passion for the magazine that's always inspired the NP crew to put our all into creating a product worthy of your enthusiasm.

On a personal note, I also feel privileged to have worked with some of the nicest, most talented people a fella could hope to meet. They've made what was already a dream job even more amazing and I owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude. It's just a shame the stupid Internet had to come along and ruin everything.

But I'd like to think we're going out with a bang, and I hope you agree. The team put a ton of work into making this issue something special, and clay artist Leslie Levings did a phenomenal job with our cover (which is pretty much my favorite thing of all time). So enjoy the final edition of Nintendo Power, and thanks again for helping the magazine last as long as it did. Keep playing with power!

STEVE THOMASON **EDITOR IN CHIEF**

NINTENDO POWER
Super Mario 2
20-Page Spectacular
Zelda – Second Quest
In-Depth Review
Baseball Roundup
Over 50 Pro Tips
Free Poster Inside
Nintendo
THE SOURCE FOR NES PLAYERS STRAIGHT FROM THE PROS

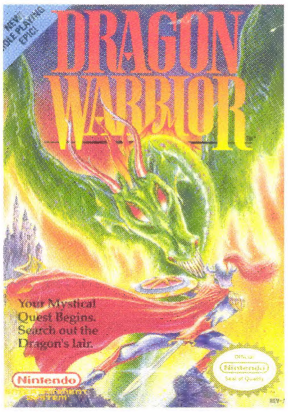
V001 JULY/AUGUST 1988

No jokes about beloved '80s icons. No insults hurled at Big the Cat. Not even any flippant comments from The Hoff. Instead, this issue's Pulse section is devoted to your remarks and fond memories of the last 24-plus years of Nintendo Power. We didn't have space to include every message, but thanks to everyone who wrote in!

LETTERS

Enter the Dragon

As a proud owner of every single Nintendo Power magazine and Player's Guide, you can imagine how much it hurt to hear the news that the magazine would be ending its 24-year run this December. I started my subscription with the Super Mario Bros. 3 issue and was instantly hooked to just about everything in it. The multipage maps, codes in the Classified Information section, the top 30 games, posters...there simply was no other source of greatness quite like it. Needless to say, I quickly bought the 10 back issues I missed. A long day at school was quickly forgotten on that special day every month when a new crispy NP mag was sitting in my mailbox. And the best offer ever? A free copy of Dragon Warrior for the NES, hands down! —**STREEX**


NEW! ROLE PLAYING EPIC!
DRAGON WARRIOR
Your Mystical Quest Begins. Search out the Dragon's lair.
Nintendo
Official Nintendo Seal of Quality

Buried Treasures

Nintendo Power has been a huge part of my life. When I started reading your magazine thoroughly I noticed that on top of informing us of upcoming Nintendo news, you guys paid extra attention to games that you knew wouldn't sell well, but tried your hardest to urge people to support the games and their developers. (I first noticed this with Gunstar Super Heroes and more recently with Rhythm Thief & the Emperor's Treasure.) It shows care, and somehow you guys have always been able to do that just through words on paper. That in and of itself is a massive accomplishment. Hell, it's what made me keep renewing, and I'm 21 years old. —**PHIL**

HERO WORSHIP
A STAR IS REBORN

It's Bro Time!

Being my nongamer parents' oldest and their only boy, I never had a brother to educate me in video games, which is why I am so grateful to you. Today my imagination is full of grassy green fields and dank caves that I have explored in the alternate dimensions of Nintendo video games that you have introduced me to. I always imagine myself as the courageous Link, or as an aspiring Pokémon Trainer, always wanting to embark on a journey of my own. If not for your in-depth coverage and beautiful printed maps from games, I never would have found my great escape, and thusly, my childhood would have been much duller.

To this day, my heart still races as I run down the stoop to a mailbox housing my new Nintendo Power. Just like when I was a kid, I run back up and dive to the couch, where, for an hour or two, I depart from Earth and arrive at the Mushroom Kingdom as I absorb every graphic and every Nintendo tidbit. I am greatly saddened to know that those days are nearly over. Thank you for being the best older brothers I could ever want/have. You truly taught me and thousands of others how to "play with power." —**STEVIE M.**

X Marks the Spot

You guys will always live on as a bunch of fond memories. I'll never forget the Mega Man X issue that came with a silver cover or the Yoshi's Island issue that came with the 3D glasses for the Virtual Boy coverage. I still frequently use the *Smashing...Live!* CD that you guys sent for free. I even won one of the 25 Surfing Pikachus that you guys gave away for Pokémon Yellow Version. —**MICHAEL P.**

NINTENDO POWER
MANIAC MANSION
Weirdos, Heroes and Space Cadets
Mission: Impossible
Kickle Cubicle
Plus Previews
TMNT: The Arcade Game
Solar Jetman
Special
Giant Game Boy Feature
Nintendo
THE SOURCE FOR NES PLAYERS STRAIGHT FROM THE PROS

Power 4 Life

I could go on and on about how much I enjoyed your Mario and Zelda comics, the Super Power Club trading cards and video game soundtracks, your incredible fold-out posters, and simply how enjoyable your magazine is more than 24 years after the fact (for the record, the past 4-5 years have been some of NP's best, in my humble opinion). But I know that so many other NP fans want to share their thoughts and memories. I will close by simply saying this: Nintendo's motto back in 1988 was "Now You're Playing with Power." Well, my wonderful friends at NP...you have and will always be playing with power in my book, and this lifelong gamer and fan of yours thanks you from the bottom of his heart for all the memories. —**MATTHEW H.**

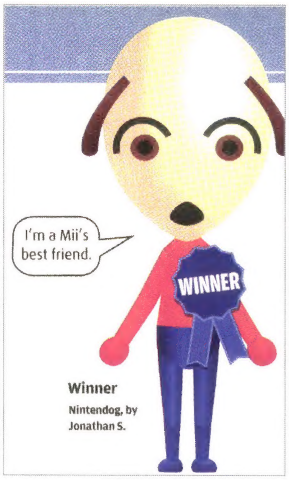
In from the Cold

It was a rough, rainy day when I came home from school to be greeted by the Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past issue of Nintendo Power—Volume 34. I cuddled up in a blanket, my mom got me milk and cookies, and I read the magazine cover to cover, forgetting about the rain and my troubles.
—**ROBERT M.**

NINTENDO POWER
THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST
Magic, Danger and Daring Deeds
THE SOURCE FOR NEWS AND STRATEGIES STRAIGHT FROM THE PROS

He Let the Dogs Out

I don't even know how I'd be able to recount my fondest memories of Nintendo Power. The magazine has given me so much over the years, but for memories, I will choose two. The first memory would be from my very first issue, Vol. 141, which had Paper Mario on the cover, and had articles that immediately convinced me to buy the game—a decision I have never regretted. Though my true fondest memory is from Vol. 216, which had the NiGHTS cover (also one of the many fantastic games the magazine got me to play). Back before the Check Mii Out Channel came out, you ran contests where subscribers could submit photos of our own Mii creations to be featured in the magazine. I was incredibly proud and indescribably happy to find out that my own Mii, the Nintendog, was chosen as the winner of the month. I simply couldn't believe that something I'd created was good enough to actually be featured in my favorite magazine that had been a part of my life for years.
—**JONATHAN S.**


I'm a Mii's best friend.
WINNER

Winner
Nintendog, by Jonathan S.

The Printed Word

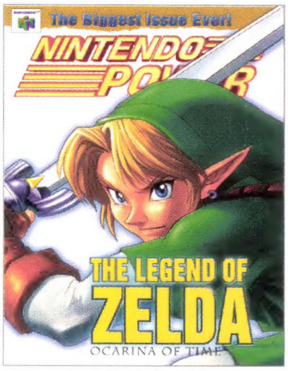
I will miss the trusted reviews, the humor, and the serious insights brought to me by Nintendo Power over the years. I will miss the splashy covers and the ability to use them as posters. The Web, Facebook, whatever—it's not the same. So to Dec. 2012 being the last issue, all I can say is: Nooooooooo! —**JEANNIE L.**

Start Your Engines!

I am an every-issue subscriber to Nintendo Power. I started with Vol. 1 when I was 8 years old. By far, my best Nintendo Power memory was when I found my 5-year-old son looking through a Nintendo Power for himself. He was fascinated by the Mario Kart 7 coverage since he loves Mario Kart Wii. Seeing a magazine I loved much of my life give joy to my own son was special. Thanks for covering Nintendo so well over the years. —**RICKY W.**

Hmmm...Creepy!

I remember the time I got my first issue. It was the Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time issue. On that day my friend and I were doing a window watch for the mailman. We had been looking outside the window for four hours. (That's how desperate we were to read your magazine.) Well, of course, impatience kicked in and we decided to go find the mailman ourselves. We went six blocks away and saw him. We followed him for three blocks, but I guess he saw us coming because he scrambled into the mail truck and sped away. We sprinted after him for a couple more blocks until he finally came to my house. We ran up to him as he got out and I guess he was scared of us because he threw my mail onto my lawn and sped away. From that day on, we would do this every time we knew a Nintendo Power issue was coming. I will miss doing this and thank you for making such an awesome magazine. —**DONALD O.**



Heroes Wanted

I have been a lifelong subscriber until I found out you were ceasing publication and I was unable to renew my subscription. I am deeply saddened by this and am hoping that one day I will see NP return. As for my fondest memory of NP, it is a recent one, which is when you had No More Heroes as your cover story. After reading it I knew I had to get that game and ended up enjoying it very much. Now I have two things I hope to see in the future, which are No More Heroes 3 and for Nintendo Power to rise like a phoenix and be back in publication. —**GEORGE L.**

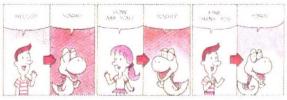
Anniversary Party

My most memorable Nintendo Power moment came from reading the 20th-anniversary issue. This issue was very special because it had a section called The Best of the Best, which was a top-20 list for each of the Nintendo systems up until that point. I still find myself pulling that issue out of my collection to look at those lists. It would be amazing if you guys could do something similar for the final issue! —**CHRISTOPHER S.**

BEST *of the* BEST

Say What?

I remember when the Mario and Zelda comics were around; I think I was 12 at the time. One of the Mario comics in particular stands out in my mind. The brothers travel to the home of the Yoshi clan and get a lesson on speaking the native tongue. Every word was "Yoshi." It still cracks me up. —**J-POP**


HELLO!
YOSHI!
HOW ARE YOU?
YOSHI?
FINE. THANK YOU
YOSHI

By Fans, for Fans

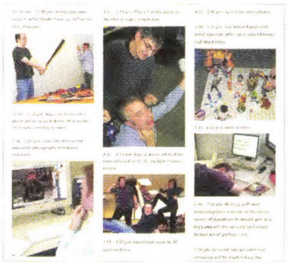
I will miss Nintendo Power as my source for information not just on first-party games but also third-party games and all things Nintendo. I have loved the antics and zaniness of the NP crew and always had to read Pulse for game-related humor. I found the Community section cool with everything members of the game community were making, whether crafts, food, or just dressing up and cosplaying. The pleasures of Nintendo Power are too numerous to list. I will miss you. —**NICOLE**

GET YOUR COMIC ON

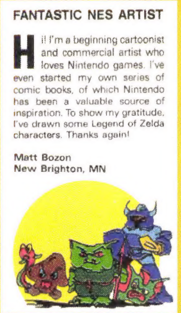
Never a Dull Moment

I loved when you guys gave us an in-depth look into your busy everyday schedule. A designated time to inflict pain on former staff writer Chris Shepperd *and* re-create Civil War battles out of action figures?! Truly, Nintendo Power was an incredible place to work!

—**ERIC O.**



Industry Insights



FANTASTIC NES ARTIST

Hi! I'm a beginning cartoonist and commercial artist who loves Nintendo games. I've even started my own series of comic books, of which Nintendo has been a valuable source of inspiration. To show my gratitude, I've drawn some Legend of Zelda characters. Thanks again!

Matt Bozon
New Brighton, MN

Dear Nintendo Power,

It's a sad thing that your adventures have ended here. My love of Nintendo Power originates at Montgomery Ward in 1985, where I bought my Nintendo Entertainment System Deluxe Set. Inside the box was an offer to join the club, which I did right away. When the first Nintendo Fun Club News arrived, president Howard Phillips made a promise to me...a solemn oath written in gray and magenta ink. He said that the club was created for people like me, and he promised to make sure I have fun. For the 25 years and multiple format changes that followed, I've opened my mailbox each day hoping it's a Nintendo Power day. From the player's guides and posters to the special features and comics, it's been a monthly celebration of all things Nintendo, and I really hate to see it go. I can only wish the Nintendo Power staff past and present all the best, and congratulate you on creating the greatest magazine ever. You've made Nintendo a part of my family for many years, and I'll very much miss hearing your voice.

—**MATT BOZON, WAYFORWARD**

If you are reading this, then you are now bearing witness to a momentous and woeful part of video game history. This is the final issue of Nintendo Power, and with it, we are losing something truly great.

Nintendo Power was there for me from the beginning of my love affair with video games, long before there were message boards, Internet gaming websites, strategy guides, or online videos. It captured my imagination as a young boy who meticulously pored over each page of the magazine, staring transfixed in awe at pictures of upcoming games that I could only dream of playing, those pixels forever burned into my memory. I am eternally grateful for how important those experiences were in shaping me to become a professional video game designer, attempting to share the same joy for games which Nintendo Power helped me to find with others through my work. Thank you, Nintendo Power.

—**PETER ONG, DREAMRIFT**

In the golden days of 8-bit gaming, when a trip to Toys R Us was an intoxicating journey into Wonderland, I would buy single issues of Nintendo Power from the store racks. Just reading a list of upcoming games, no pictures, was enough to send the imagination reeling. What was "Mother"? Nintendo Power was the first magazine to which I ever subscribed, and I still remember the day I came home from school in 1990 and my mom handed me the Super Mario Bros. 3 strategy-guide issue. Nintendo Power was everything: you'd scramble through back issues to find cheat codes, trace the maps with your finger or your eyes to substitute for playing the 90 percent of games that you'd never, ever own, look for the first screenshots of upcoming games. The explosion of alternative media outlets and independent publications in the years that followed that golden age took the spotlight off Nintendo Power, but in that golden age it was the Bible, showing up monthly in your mailbox.

—**CHRIS KOHLER, GAME|LIFE**

My Nintendo Power subscription started in January 1991 with Vol. 20 featuring Mega Man 3 on the cover, and Super Famicom and Super Mario World teaser images within the pages. Vol. 66 featured two Mortal Kombat II (Super NES) codes that I mailed in, and I received a Super Metroid magnet for my efforts! I hung the foldout posters on my bedroom walls, cut out Super NES hardware pictures and posted them on our household bulletin board. Today, at Next Level Games, I'm fortunate and honored to work first-hand with the same Nintendo that I had read about over the years in Nintendo Power. Thank you to the entire Nintendo Power staff over its 24-year run, for providing me many years of entertainment, joy, and inspiration.

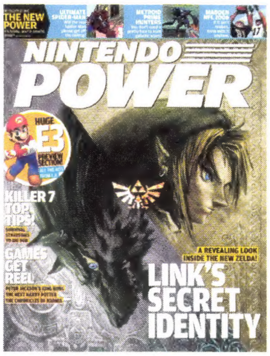
—**BRIAN DAVIS, NEXT LEVEL GAMES**

NINTENDO POWER
MEGA MAN III
Test your mettle on a new "mega" mission!
Don't Miss!
Monster Features
Déjà Vu
The Immortal
And More!
Bart Simpson vs The Space Mutants
THE SOURCE FOR NEWS AND STRATEGIES STRAIGHT FROM THE PROS

Twilight's Gleaming

Looking back on it all I have never seen the NP crew pull out all the stops to hype a video game the way you did with Twilight Princess. The combination of yearlong interviews with key staff members and listing favorite moments from the entire series was a wonderful experience. But nothing in the magazine's history ever put more of a smile on my face or gave me a bigger adrenaline rush than the top 200 Nintendo games countdown. Wonderful list—shame it won't get expanded to 300, especially when it was so close.

—CYRUS



Last Hurrah

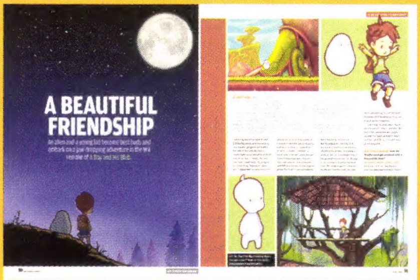
I can't believe this is the end, old friend. You've been a part of my life for so long; it's going to be hard imagining life without you. Every month I've looked forward to that new issue waiting for me in the mailbox. To not have that anymore—words can't express my sorrow. When I was a child I enjoyed simply looking at the pages, maybe reading a walkthrough here or there. As I got older I was able to appreciate the knowledge you divulged. I'll never forget the pure excitement I felt when I read the ever-vexing secret to getting past a certain area in Shadowgate, a game that went unfinished for many years. And even now you've succeeded in inspiring me, as I am about to receive my BS degree in journalism. Thank you for your excellence in writing. Thank you for spotlighting gems of video games that have gone unnoticed and unmentioned by so many others. Thank you for giving so much back to the fans. Thank you for giving us a voice. Thank you for everything!

—MATT J.

As soon as it came in the mail, my issue of Nintendo Power with The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past on the cover went with me everywhere, including school. This was 1992, so that would make me 10 years old. I read it obsessively, soaking in every detail of the new Zelda game and poring over the screenshots. So, needless to say, when my dad took my sister and me out hiking in the wilderness, the issue of Nintendo Power came with me as far as it could. After a short protest, I left it in the car. A few hours later when we returned, the car was missing! We had accidentally left the keys on the bumper and somebody took the car! As we attempted to flag down passersby, I suddenly realized the magnitude of the situation. My magazine. My Nintendo Power magazine had been stolen! Fortunately, the cops shared my sense of urgency and found our car. I ran into the back and...unbounded joy! Thieves hadn't taken off with my magazine...and we were reunited.

Years later, I was working at WayForward. And that's been a friendship rekindled with Nintendo Power in a whole different way. Being interviewed for A Boy and His Blob was like everything coming full circle. I was making the games that my childhood self stared at with anticipation and wonder. I didn't realize how much this has meant to me until I wrote all of this down; Nintendo Power will forever be the magazine of my childhood. I never thought I'd be in tears again over Nintendo Power!

—SEAN VELASCO, WAYFORWARD



I didn't know I'd grow up to be a video game designer back in grade school, when I pored over every issue so I could regale my classmates with information on River City Ransom or tips for TMNT—but I certainly hoped I would. NP's colorful screenshot maps provided a template for how level design worked, and helpful articles taught me the difference between sprites and tiles. As I grew up, I couldn't help but get excited any time a game of mine appeared in the magazine, and getting a Nintendo Power cover feature (Vol. 241) was the highlight of my career.

But more importantly, before we had the Internet to connect gamers from across the world, Nintendo Power provided us all a sense of community, whether it was lending a friend a frayed copy of the Final Fantasy guide or just looking at the creative envelope art in Pulse. Know that it's a connection that will be missed by every young Power Player of the past quarter century, and more industry professionals than would probably admit it. Thanks, NP—you were the best mag around.

—TOMM HULETT, KONAMI

NINTENDO POWER
GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

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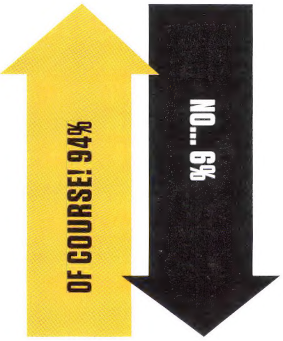
Cover art by Leslie Levings

Official Nintendo Seal

What Nintendo fans think, want, and do

The SCORE

DO YOU SAVE AND COLLECT YOUR ISSUES OF NINTENDO POWER?



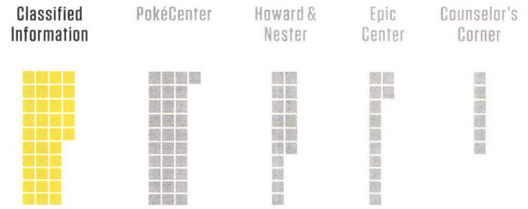
9%

OF READERS HAVE BEEN WITH NP SINCE THE VERY BEGINNING.

IF YOU HADN'T READ ABOUT IT IN NP, MANY OF YOU WOULD HAVE MISSED...

1. **Kid Icarus: Uprising**
2. The World Ends with You
3. EarthBound
4. Rayman Origins
5. Professor Layton and the Curious Village
6. Xenoblade Chronicles
7. Scribblenauts
8. Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney
9. Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies
10. Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors

WHAT CLASSIC NINTENDO POWER SECTION WAS YOUR FAVORITE?

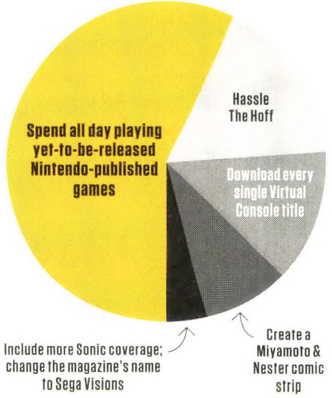


WHAT IS THE COOLEST WEAPON IN MEGA MAN 10?

TRIPLE BLADE

Triple Blade 28% • Solar Blaze 21% • Commando Bomb 13% Thunder Wool 13% • Chill Spike 8% • Wheel Cutter 7% Water Shield 6% • Rebound Striker 4%

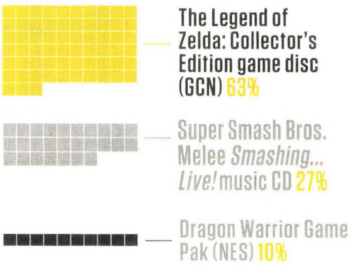
IF YOU WERE NINTENDO POWER'S EDITOR IN CHIEF FOR A DAY, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?



THE GAME THAT TURNED MOST NP READERS INTO NINTENDO FANS IS:

SUPER MARIO BROS.

WHAT WAS THE COOLEST FREE NINTENDO POWER SUBSCRIBER INCENTIVE/BONUS?



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NP'S ALL-TIME FAVORITE GAMES

★★★★★

We count down the 285 titles that—in our not-so-humble opinion—are the best to ever appear on a Nintendo platform.

ONE OF THE PERKS of working at a video game magazine is that you get to play a lot of video games. In fact, we've covered more than a thousand titles in the publication's 24-year history. But which have been our favorites? We're glad you asked! On the following pages, we'll count down NP's top 285 games of all time, as voted on by the current editorial team (which is why this endeavor may differ from similar lists we've done in the past). We chose 285 because that's how many issues of the magazine there have been—and because we're gluttons for punishment. If you disagree with any of our picks, feel free to send in a lengthy diatribe explaining why. No one will read it, what with the magazine not existing anymore, but you'll probably feel better.

285 Super Star Wars
Super NES • JVC • 1992

Back in the 16-bit era, Super Star Wars was unquestionably the best game adaptation of George Lucas's journey to a galaxy far, far away. Fantastic audio complemented the action.

284 Donkey Kong
NES • Nintendo • 1986

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283 Tecmo Bowl
NES • Tecmo • 1989

282 Nintendogs
DS • Nintendo • 2005

281 Killer 7
GameCube • Capcom • 2005

280 Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword
DS • Tecmo • 2008

279 Resident Evil: The Darkside Chronicles
Wii • Capcom • 2009

278 Harvest Moon 64
Nintendo 64 • Natsume • 1999

277 UN Squadron
Super NES • Capcom • 1991

276 Mario Paint
Super NES • Nintendo • 1992

Sometimes gamers need to take a break from fast-paced action and stretch their creative muscles. Using the included Super NES mouse, aspiring artists would create their own drawings, animations, and catchy music.

275 Punch-Out!!
Wii • Nintendo • 2009

274 Avalon Code
DS • Xseed • 2009

A sentimental favorite of one editor, Avalon Code may not have executed on its sky-high ambitions, but it's still one of the most interesting and overlooked games in the DS library.

273 Beetle Adventure Racing
Nintendo 64 • Electronic Arts • 1999

272 Donkey Kong Country
Super NES • Nintendo • 1994

When Donkey Kong Country hit the Super NES, gamers were blown away. The then-incredible prerendered visuals and excellent level design perfectly set the stage for Donkey Kong's long-awaited return.

271 Ninja Gaiden III: The Ancient Ship of Doom
NES • Tecmo • 1991

270 Tiny Toon Adventures: Buster Busts Loose!
Super NES • Konami • 1993

269 Street Fighter Alpha 2
Super NES • Nintendo • 1996

268 Solatorobo: Red the Hunter
DS • Xseed • 2011

267 New Super Mario Bros. 2
N3DS • Nintendo • 2012

266 Mortal Kombat II
Super NES • Acclaim • 1994

265 Theatrhythm Final Fantasy
N3DS • Square Enix • 2012

We'll take pretty much any excuse to listen to Final Fantasy music—some of the greatest in the medium's history—but put it in a rhythm game that features clever, RPG-inspired mechanics, and you've got something pretty special.

264 Mega Man Zero
GBA • Capcom • 2002

263 Super C
NES • Konami • 1990

262 Phantasy Star 0
DS • Sega • 2009

261 Super Mario Land 2: 6 Golden Coins
Game Boy • Nintendo • 1992

260 Contra 4
DS • Konami • 2007

259 Sparkster
Super NES • Konami • 1994

258

Double Dragon II: The Revenge

NES • Acclaim • 1990

257

Mario Party 2

Nintendo 64 • Nintendo • 2000

For our money, Mario Party 2 represents the high point of Nintendo's prolific party-game franchise. The concept hadn't yet grown stale and nobody got blisters from playing this particular installment.

256

F-Zero

Super NES • Nintendo • 1991

255

Conker's Bad Fur Day

Nintendo 64 • Nintendo • 2001

254

Willow

NES • Capcom • 1989

For all Zelda's success, it's surprising it didn't inspire more imitators. Willow was little more than a Zelda clone, but the Zelda formula is so strong that even *that* made for a pretty satisfying game.

253

Kirby: Canvas Curse

DS • Nintendo • 2005

252

Super Smash TV

Super NES • Acclaim • 1992

251

Shantae: Risky's Revenge

DSiWare • Capcom • 2010

250

Kid Niki: Radical Ninja

NES • Data East • 1987

Consider this—in Kid Niki the bosses include a huge centipede, a giant-headed thug who attacks with his bad breath, and a crazed monk who drops literal F-bombs. It's a weird game, sure, but it's darn fun.

249

Burnout 2: Point of Impact

GameCube • Acclaim • 2003

248

No More Heroes

Wii • Ubisoft • 2008

247

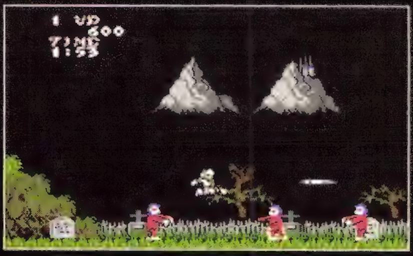
Shadow of the Ninja

NES • Natsume • 1990

246

Ghosts 'n Goblins

NES • Capcom • 1986



245

G.I. Joe

NES • Taxan • 1991

244

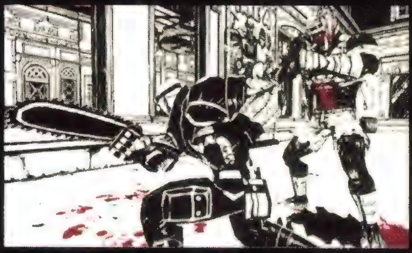
Zack & Wiki: Quest for Barbaros' Treasure

Wii • Capcom • 2007

243

MadWorld

Wii • Sega • 2009



242

Rhythm Heaven Fever

Wii • Nintendo • 2012

241

Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars

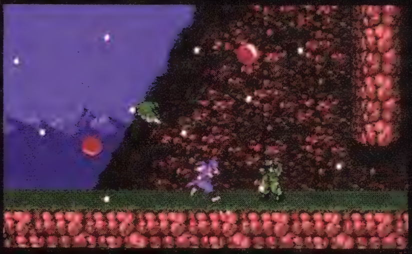
DS • Rockstar • 2009

Rockstar achieved what seemed impossible with the Mature-rated Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars. Camera perspective aside, virtually everything you'd expect from a polygonal Grand Theft Auto game is successfully replicated in this amazing handheld title.

240

Ninja Gaiden II: The Dark Sword of Chaos

NES • Tecmo • 1990



239

Blast Corps

Nintendo 64 • Nintendo • 1997

238

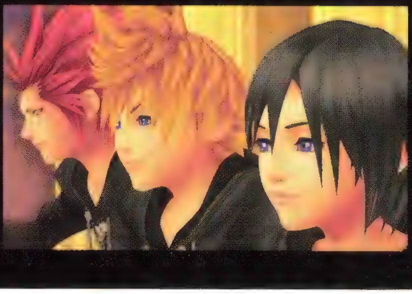
Mario Tennis: Power Tour

GameCube • Nintendo • 2005

237

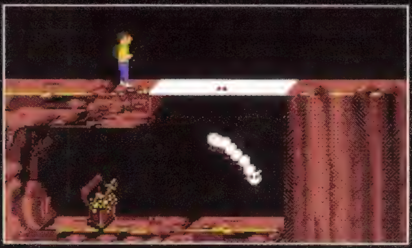
Kingdom Hearts 358/2 Days

DS • Square Enix • 2009



236 Kirby's Adventure
NES • Nintendo • 1993

235 A Boy and His Blob: Trouble on Blobolonia
NES • Absolute • 1989



234 Mega Man V
Game Boy • Capcom • 1994

233 Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg
GameCube • Sega • 2003

Say what you will about the goofy chicken-suited protagonist and ludicrous theme song; this quirky, innovative platformer from the creators of Sonic the Hedgehog is a brilliant, must-play experience.

232 Ikaruga
GameCube • Atari • 2003

231 Super Ghouls 'n Ghosts
Super NES • Capcom • 1991

230 The Magical Quest Starring Mickey Mouse
Super NES • Capcom • 1992

229 Space Megaforce
Super NES • Toho • 1992

228 Tales of the Abyss
N3DS • Namco Bandai • 2012

227 Resident Evil 0
GameCube • Capcom • 2002

226 Lunar Legend
Game Boy Advance • Ubisoft • 2002

Boasting an amazing coming-of-age fantasy story and some of the most memorable characters in the genre, Lunar Legend is a great handheld version of one the finest (and most overlooked) RPGs ever made.

225 Ice Hockey
NES • Nintendo • 1988

224 Cooking Mama
DS • Majesco • 2006

223 WWF WrestleMania 2000
Nintendo 64 • THQ • 1999

222 Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles
GameCube • Nintendo • 2004

221 Metroid Fusion
GBA • Nintendo • 2002

220 Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory
GameCube • Ubisoft • 2005

We had to grit our teeth a bit with this selection, as this sloppy GameCube port was easily the worst version of Chaos Theory. But it was still a great game, and the most compelling title in the Splinter Cell canon.

219 MVP Baseball 2005
GameCube • Electronic Arts • 2005

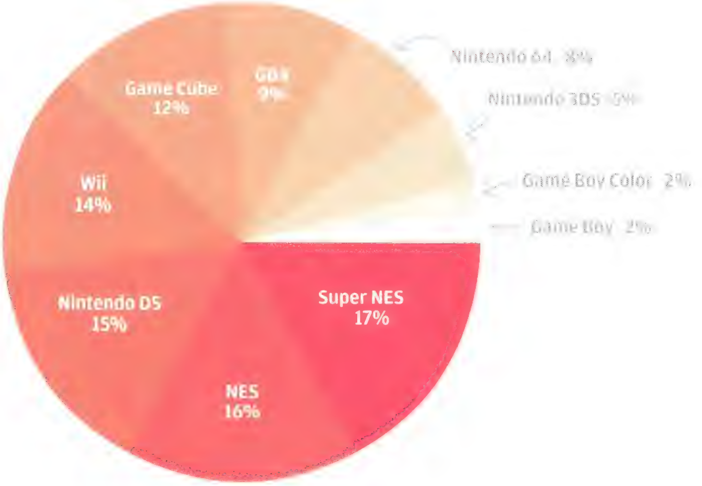
Why include a seven-year-old baseball game on this list? Because it's one of the most laudable sports sims to ever appear on a Nintendo console. Unfortunately, it also spelled the end for EA's acclaimed hardball franchise—2K Sports secured exclusive rights to MLB the following year.

218 Ninja Five-O
GBA • Konami • 2003

217 F-Zero GX
GameCube • Nintendo • 2003

By the Numbers: Systems

NP's top 285 games, broken down by platform.



216 Mario Golf: Advance Tour

GBA • Nintendo • 2004

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215 Rayman 2: The Great Escape

Nintendo 64 • Ubisoft • 1999

214 Mario Kart: Double Dash

GameCube • Nintendo • 2003

213 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: The Arcade Game

NES • Konami • 1990

The action-packed TMNT coin-op was one of the best reasons to visit an arcade in the early '90s, and the NES adaptation made a worthy attempt at bringing the experience home. This version even added new levels and bosses.

212 Star Fox

Super NES • Nintendo • 1993

211 Cybernator

Super NES • Konami • 1993

Part of an obscure Japanese series of side-scrolling action games, Cybernator was kind of like Contra, but you played as a mech and the stages were wide-open, destructible, and full of little side quests. Sweet game.

210 Sin & Punishment: Star Successor

Wii • Nintendo • 2010

209 Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition

N3DS • Capcom • 2011

208 Final Fantasy: The 4 Heroes of Light

DS • Square Enix • 2010

207 Metal Storm

NES • Irem • 1991

As NES games go, Metal Storm is relatively obscure. It is, however, a hidden gem in the system's library. The entire experience is built around your mech's ability to reverse gravity, and the varied ways the skill is used keeps things fresh.

206 New Super Mario Bros.

DS • Nintendo • 2006

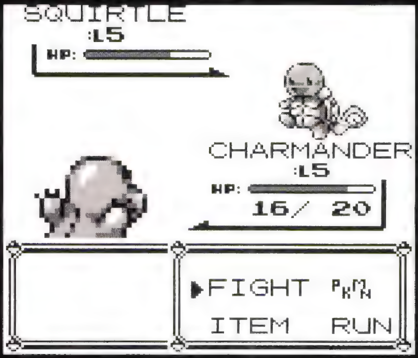
205 Silent Hill: Shattered Memories

Wii • Konami • 2009

A worthy reimagining of the original Silent Hill, Shattered Memories made brilliant use of the Wii Remote controller to immerse players in the experience. It also has a remarkably poignant ending that caught us completely by surprise.

204 Pokémon Red and Blue Versions

Game Boy • Nintendo • 1998



203 Lufia II: Rise of the Sinistrals

Super NES • Natsume • 1996

202 Metal Gear Solid

Game Boy Color • Konami • 2000

Top 5: Heroes

1. **Link**
2. Mario
3. Mega Man
4. Phoenix Wright
5. Samus

201 Trauma Center: Under the Knife 2

DS • Atlus • 2008

200 Earthworm Jim 2

Super NES • Playmates • 1996

199 NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams

Wii • Sega • 2007

198 Illusion of Gaia

Super NES • Nintendo • 1994

The gameplay and pseudo-historical setting made Illusion of Gaia a superb action-RPG, but its offbeat writing is what rendered it unforgettable. "Large, yummy roast leg of yak" or "poisoned marsupial pie," anyone?

197 Wario Land 3

Game Boy Color • Nintendo • 2000

196 Pokémon Ruby and Sapphire Versions

GBA • Nintendo • 2003

195

Wave Race 64

Nintendo 64 • Nintendo • 1996

194

The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass

DS • Nintendo • 2007

193

Mario Kart DS

DS • Nintendo • 2005

192

Advance Wars: Dual Strike

DS • Nintendo • 2005

191

Wii Sports Resort

Wii • Nintendo • 2009

190

Super Monkey Ball

GameCube • Sega • 2001

189

Monster Hunter Tri

Wii • Capcom • 2010

188

Star Wars Rogue Squadron

Nintendo 64 • LucasArts • 1998

187

Super Scribblenauts

DS • WB Interactive • 2010

186

Rock Band 3

Wii • MTV Games • 2010

All the Rock Band iterations are great, but Harmonix perfected the rhythm-game formula with Rock Band 3. The song list is vast and varied, and the keyboard is a welcome addition. Most importantly, though, it's just plain fun to rock out with your friends.

185

Pokémon Diamond and Pearl Versions

DS • Nintendo • 2007

184

Donkey Kong Country Returns

Wii • Nintendo • 2010

183

Super Paper Mario

Wii • Nintendo • 2007

182

New Super Mario Bros. Wii

Wii • Nintendo • 2009

181

Rhythm Heaven

DS • Nintendo • 2009

180

Dead Space: Extraction

Wii • Electronic Arts • 2009

179

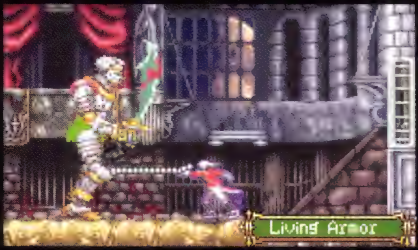
Kirby's Epic Yarn

Wii • Nintendo • 2010

178

Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance

GBA • Konami • 2002



177

The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures

GameCube • Nintendo • 2004

176

Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies

DS • Nintendo • 2010

175

Meteos

DS • Nintendo • 2005

At first Meteos seems overly simple, but after a few stages you begin to appreciate the strategy involved in this interstellar puzzle game. It also features a well-balanced and intense multiplayer mode.

174

Mario Kart Wii

Wii • Nintendo • 2008

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173

Mario Golf

Nintendo 64 • Nintendo • 1999

172

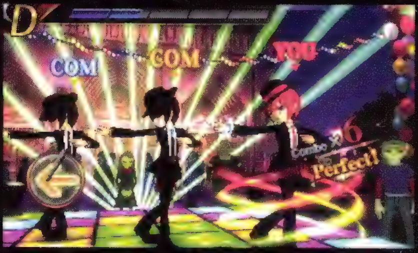
Epic Mickey

Wii • Disney Interactive • 2010

171 Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance
GameCube • Nintendo • 2005

170 The Legend of Zelda: Spirit Tracks
DS • Nintendo • 2009

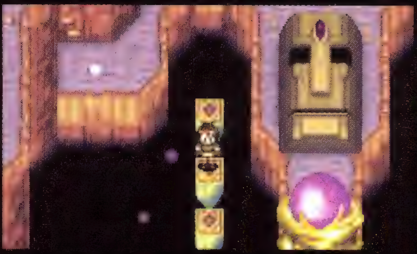
169 Rhythm Thief & the Emperor's Treasure
N3DS • Sega • 2012



168 Kirby's Return to Dream Land
Wii • Nintendo • 2011

167 Mario Kart 7
N3DS • Nintendo • 2011

166 Golden Sun: The Lost Age
GBA • Nintendo • 2003

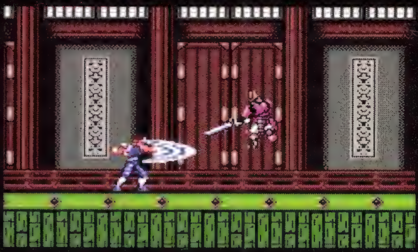


165 Tactics Ogre: The Knight of Lodis
GBA • Atlus • 2002

164 Faxanadu
NES • Nintendo • 1989

163 Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time
DS • Nintendo • 2005

162 Strider
NES • Capcom • 1989

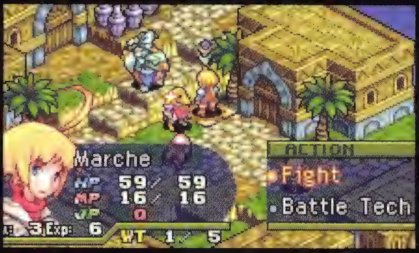


161 Super Mario Kart
Super NES • Nintendo • 1992

160 Luigi's Mansion
GameCube • Nintendo • 2001

Finally stepping out from his brother's shadow, Luigi headlined the GameCube launch with this charmingly unique ghost-hunting romp. The game was criminally underrated in its time, but has since garnered a devoted following.

159 Final Fantasy Tactics Advance
GBA • Nintendo • 2003



158 Metal Gear
NES • Konami • 1988

157 Maniac Mansion
NES • Jaleco • 1990

156 EarthBound
Super NES • Nintendo • 1995

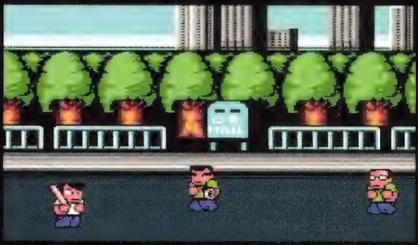
EarthBound is an RPG in a class of its own. Its contemporary setting, heartfelt story, and bizarre sense of humor are just a few of the reasons why this title has generated an immense cult following in the years since its release.

155 Final Fantasy V Advance
GBA • Nintendo • 2006

154 Okamiden
DS • Capcom • 2011

153 Mega Man Zero 2
GBA • Capcom • 2003

152 River City Ransom
NES • American Technos • 1990

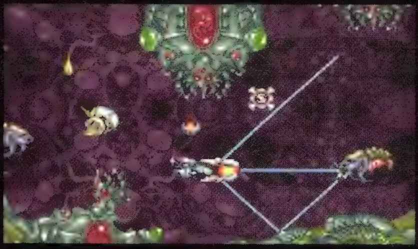


151 Bionic Commando
NES • Capcom • 1988

150 Sonic Generations
N3DS • Sega • 2011

Inspired by 20 years of hedgehog history, Sonic Generations combined reimagined levels from past Sonic titles into a single awesome platformer. It was loaded with bonus content and replay value, too.

149 R-Type III: The Third Lightning
Super NES • Jaleco • 1994



148 WarioWare: Touched!
DS • Nintendo • 2005

147 Etrian Odyssey III: The Drowned City
DS • Atlus • 2010

146 Demon's Crest
Super NES • Capcom • 1994

145
Fire Emblem
GBA • Nintendo • 2003

144
Tatsunoko vs. Capcom: Ultimate All-Stars
Wii • Capcom • 2010

143
Baseball Stars
NES • SNK • 1989

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142
Fire Emblem: Radiant Dawn
Wii • Nintendo • 2007

With no breakout star in the series, the votes of the Fire Emblem fans on staff were split among several titles. Look for 2013's Fire Emblem: Awakening to be the badly needed champion of this oft-overlooked strategy franchise.

141
Animal Crossing
GameCube • Nintendo • 2002

Animal Crossing isn't so much a game as it is a way of life. With a year's worth of activities to discover in your town, there's always something new going on. The fact that you can find playable NES games just adds to the enjoyment of this charming title.

140
Kid Icarus
NES • Nintendo • 1987

139
Paper Mario
Nintendo 64 • Nintendo • 2001

138
Crystalis
NES • SNK • 1990

137
Pokémon Puzzle League
Nintendo 64 • Nintendo • 2000

2800
SPEED LV
21
LEVEL
NORMAL

136
Mario Tennis
Game Boy Color • Nintendo • 2001

135
Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow
GBA • Konami • 2003

134
Final Fantasy
NES • Nintendo • 1990

133
Jet Force Gemini
Nintendo 64 • Nintendo • 1999

132
Advance Wars
GBA • Nintendo • 2001

The series known as Famicom Wars in Japan finally made its way to our shores with this GBA installment, and we've been addicted to its award-winning brand of turn-based strategy ever since. Plus, the commercial success of Advance Wars paved the way for a stateside debut of Nintendo's other long-running strategy franchise: Fire Emblem.

131
Baten Kaitos: Eternal Wings and the Lost Ocean
GameCube • Namco • 2004

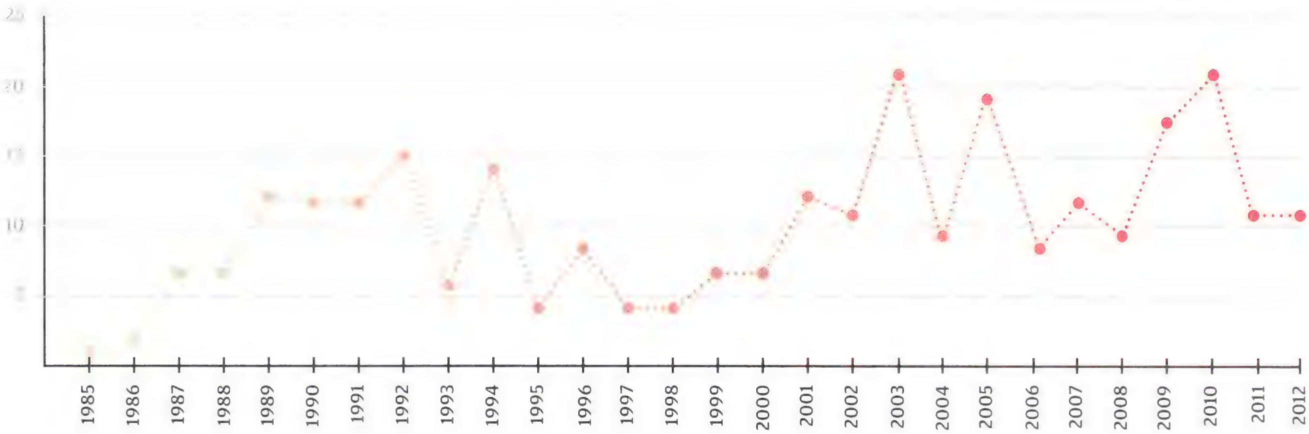
130
Donkey Kong Jungle Beat
GameCube • Nintendo • 2005

129
Bit.Trip Runner
WiiWare • Aksys Games • 2010

The blocky graphics and simple gameplay of Bit.Trip Runner hide the fact that it's one of the most addictive and challenging games in recent years. It's hard to avoid the "one more try" syndrome as you attempt to perfectly run, jump, slide, and kick your way through each stage.

By the Numbers: Years

Which year generated the most games on our list? Find out here!



128 Super Mario RPG: Legend of the Seven Stars
Super NES • Nintendo • 1996

127 The Last Story
Wii • Xseed • 2012

126 Shadowgate
NES • Kemco • 1989

125 Dragon Warrior IV
NES • Enix • 1992

124 Pokémon Pinball: Ruby & Sapphire
GBA • Nintendo • 2003

123 Mega Man 9
WiiWare • Capcom • 2008

After being absent for many years, the original Mega Man returned in this 8-bit-inspired downloadable title. Featuring a retro look and hardcore challenge, Mega Man 9 was truly a return to form.

122 Picross 3D
DS • Nintendo • 2010

121 No More Heroes 2: Desperate Struggle
Wii • Ubisoft • 2010

120 Castlevania
NES • Konami • 1987

119 Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Justice for All
DS • Capcom • 2007

118 Golden Sun
GBA • Nintendo • 2001

117 Cave Story
WiiWare • Nicalis • 2010

116 Castlevania II: Simon's Quest
NES • Konami • 1988

115 Dragon Warrior
NES • Nintendo • 1989

114 Super Street Fighter II: The New Challengers
Super NES • Capcom • 1994

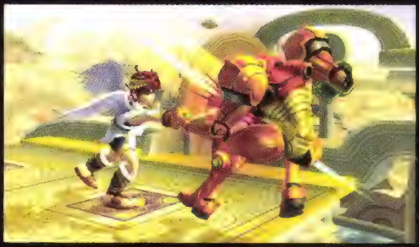
113 Dragon Quest V: Hand of the Heavenly Bride
DS • Square Enix • 2009

North Americans didn't get to play Dragon Quest V until 17 years after its original Japanese release, and it's a testament to the game's time-tested mechanics and warm-hearted story that it still managed to impress in 2009.

112 Etrian Odyssey
DS • Atlus • 2007

Etrian Odyssey not only captured the tension and challenge that made old-school PC games so compelling, but also cleverly updated it for the Nintendo DS with features like touch-screen map-making. Three sequels later, its simple formula still satisfies.

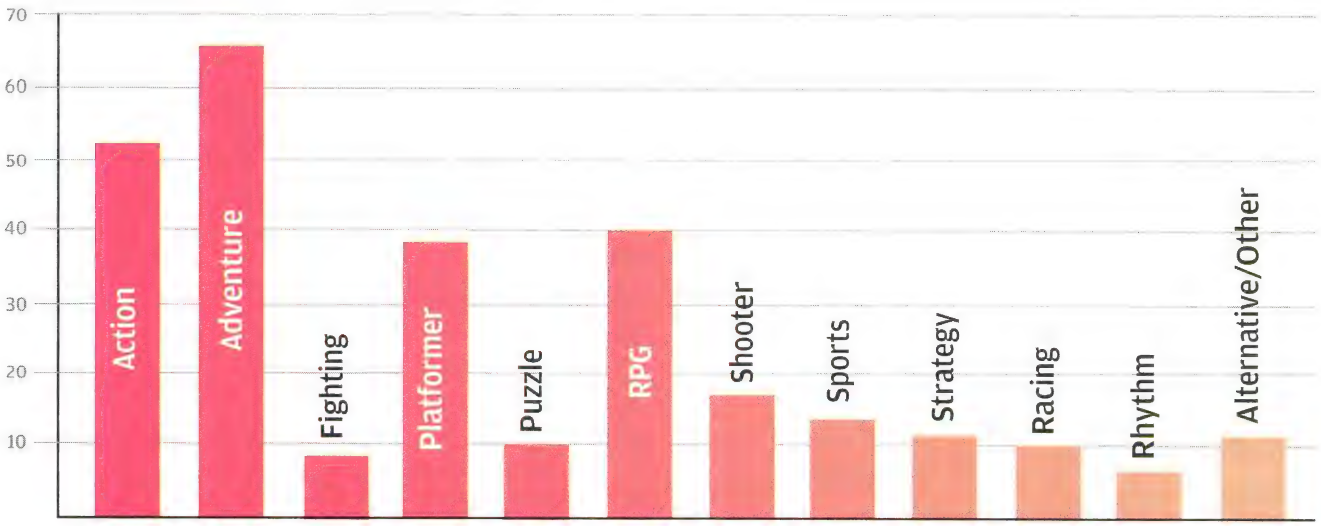
111 Super Smash Bros. Brawl
Wii • Nintendo • 2008



110 The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Ages
Game Boy Color • Nintendo • 2001

By the Numbers: Genre

How many games from each genre made the cut.



109

The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Seasons

Game Boy Color • Nintendo • 2001

108

Out of this World

Super NES • Interplay • 1992

The brainchild of French developer Eric Chahi, Out of this World demonstrated early on the power of video games as a storytelling medium. A worthwhile sequel entitled Heart of the Alien came out for the Sega CD in 1994, but Chahi had minimal involvement in its creation.

107

Professor Layton and the Curious Village

DS • Nintendo • 2008

106

Earthworm Jim

Super NES • Playmates • 1994

105

Gunstar Super Heroes

GBA • Sega • 2005

104

Blaster Master

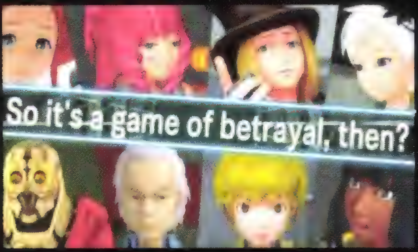
NES • Sunsoft • 1988

Whether you're riding around the mazelike underground in your upgradeable tank or exploring on foot, there's never a dull moment in Blaster Master. This Metroid-style action game is also incredibly difficult, so bring your skills.

103

Zero Escape: Virtue's Last Reward

N3DS • Aksys Games • 2012



102

Pokémon Snap

Nintendo 64 • Nintendo • 1999

101

Professor Layton and the Unwound Future

DS • Nintendo • 2010

100

Donkey Kong

Game Boy • Nintendo • 1994

99

VVVVVV

N3DS • Nicalis • 2011

98

Mario & Luigi: Bowser's Inside Story

DS • Nintendo • 2009

97

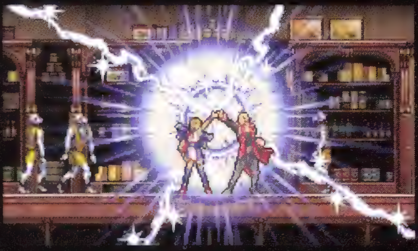
Castlevania III: Dracula's Curse

NES • Konami • 1990

96

Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin

DS • Konami • 2006



95

The Legend of the Mystical Ninja

Super NES • Konami • 1992

Mystical Ninja is a fantastic platformer with tight controls and loads of the keen graphical effects that made Super NES games so much fun to look at. It's made even better by the wild bosses, explorable towns, loads of minigames, and a bizarre sense of humor.

94

Mario's Picross

Game Boy • Nintendo • 1995

93

Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes

GameCube • Konami • 2004

92

Soul Blazer

Super NES • Enix • 1992

91

Sonic Colors

Wii • Sega • 2010

90

Ghost Trick: Phantom Detective

Nintendo DS • Capcom • 2011

As a ghost with the power to possess and manipulate objects, you have only a single night to solve your own murder. Innovative gameplay and compelling mysteries promise to keep you in suspense until the very end.

89

Final Fight

Super NES • Capcom • 1991

88

Secret of Mana

Super NES • Squaresoft • 1993

87

Tetris Attack

Super NES • Nintendo • 1996

86

Bully: Scholarship Edition

Wii • Rockstar Games • 2008

85

Metroid

NES • Nintendo • 1987

Metroid fans rallied around the more polished Super Metroid, but the NES original was a tremendously influential game that still plays well today. And oh, how that twist ending blew young and impressionable minds in the '80s!

84

Kirby Super Star

Super NES • Nintendo • 1996

83

Super Mario Sunshine

GameCube • Nintendo • 2002

This GameCube effort is often compared unfavorably to Mario's other platforming masterpieces, but taken on its own, the game is pretty amazing. Its expansive landscapes were masterfully crafted, and the FLUDD water backpack allowed for a host of new gameplay possibilities.

82

SimCity

Super NES • Nintendo • 1991

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81 Ogre Battle 64: Person of Lordly Caliber

Nintendo 64 • Atlus • 2000

80 Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors

DS • Aksys Games • 2010

79 GoldenEye 007

Nintendo 64 • Nintendo • 1997

It wasn't the earliest first-person shooter to appear on home consoles, but GoldenEye 007 certainly helped popularize the genre with the console-gaming crowd, thanks in large part to its superb up-to-four-player deathmatch mode.

78 Metroid Prime 3: Corruption

Wii • Nintendo • 2007

77 Little King's Story

Wii • Xseed • 2009

76 Sin and Punishment

Wii Virtual Console (N64) • Nintendo • 2007

Only games released in the US are eligible for this list. Sin and Punishment didn't make it to these shores in its original form on Nintendo 64, but it became available via Virtual Console in 2007, so we're going to allow it. Sometimes you fudge the rules for a game this good.

75 WWF No Mercy

Nintendo 64 • THQ • 2000

74 Metal Gear Solid: Snake Eater 3D

N3DS • Konami • 2012

73 Resident Evil: Revelations

N3DS • Capcom • 2012

72 Xenoblade Chronicles

Wii • Nintendo • 2012

For a while we weren't sure if Xenoblade Chronicles was going to make it to North America, but we're sure glad it did. The world is vast; the scope is epic. It's easily one of the best RPGs to come out of Japan in recent years.

71 WarioWare: Twisted!

GBA • Nintendo • 2005

70 Tales of Symphonia

GameCube • Namco • 2004

69 Star Wars Rogue Leader: Rogue Squadron II

GameCube • LucasArts • 2001

68 Axelay

Super NES • Konami • 1992

67 Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney

Nintendo DS • Capcom • 2005

Think law is boring? No way! If you've ever played an Ace Attorney game, then you know that the only thing more fun than identifying the true criminal is pointing your index finger and yelling "Objection!" into the DS microphone.

66 Pikmin 2

GameCube • Nintendo • 2004

65 Super Punch-Out!!

Super NES • Nintendo • 1994

64 Kid Icarus: Uprising

N3DS • Nintendo • 2012

Despite the controversy surrounding its control scheme, Kid Icarus's long-awaited return offered enough beauty, content, and surprises to claim the second-highest berth for a N3DS game.

63 Klonoa

Wii • Namco Bandai • 2009

62 Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver Versions

DS • Nintendo • 2010

61 Tetris DS

DS • Nintendo • 2006

60 Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time

GameCube • Ubisoft • 2003

59 Star Fox 64

Nintendo 64 • Nintendo • 1997

58 Zelda II: The Adventure of Link

NES • Nintendo • 1988

57 Rayman Origins

Wii • Ubisoft • 2011

56 Pikmin

GameCube • Nintendo • 2001

55 WarioWare, Inc.: Mega Microgame$

GBA • Nintendo • 2003

54 Phantasy Star Online: Episode I & II

GameCube • Sega • 2002

This dungeon-crawling, loot-gathering adventure is enjoyable enough when you're going at it solo, but the experience truly shines when played online with a party of four. It even made tracking down a GameCube Broadband Adapter worth the trouble.

53 Tetris

Game Boy • Nintendo • 1989

52 Final Fantasy II

Super NES • Squaresoft • 1991

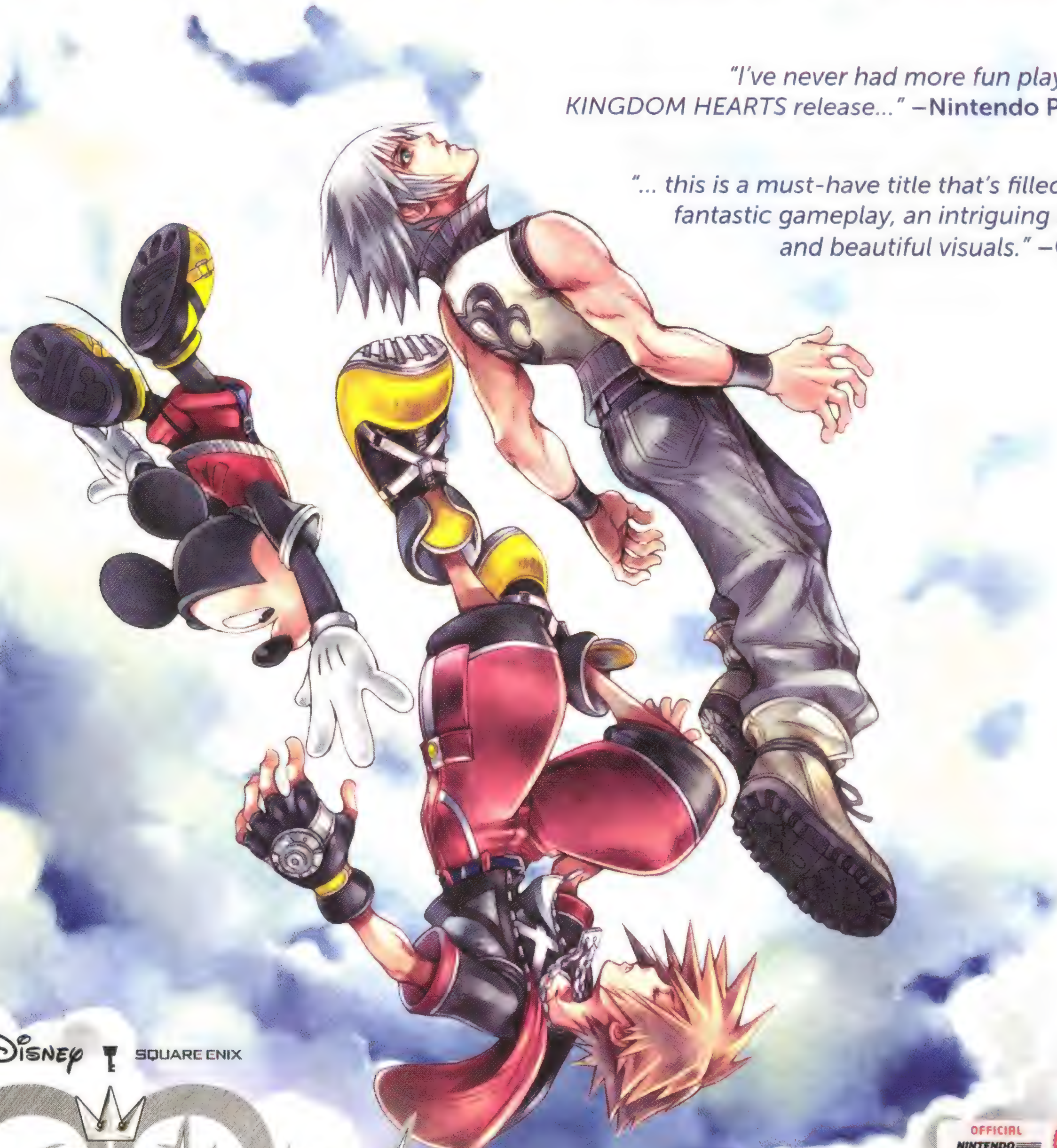
51 The World Ends with You

DS • Square Enix • 2008

DARKNESS BECOMES LIGHT, LIGHT FALLS INTO DARKNESS.

"I've never had more fun playing a KINGDOM HEARTS release..." —Nintendo Power

"... this is a must-have title that's filled with fantastic gameplay, an intriguing story, and beautiful visuals." —G4TV



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KINGDOM HEARTS 10th ANNIVERSARY

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50 Ninja Gaiden

NES • Tecmo • 1989

Ninja Gaiden was perhaps the first action game to ever attempt to tell a complicated story. And although that story was nearly incomprehensible, its anime-style "cinema displays" were the talk of the playground. The game's ninja action was fast-paced and satisfying, and its legendarily difficult final level made men out of a generation of boys.

49 Mega Man

NES • Capcom • 1987

The original Mega Man tends to get short shrift because its sequel was so amazing, but this is nonetheless one of the best action games on the NES. The rock-paper-scissors style of gameplay was quite innovative at the time.

48 Skies of Arcadia Legends

GameCube • Sega • 2003

Skies of Arcadia was one of the Dreamcast's last great games, a spirit-of-adventure RPG set in a world of sky pirates and hidden treasures. The title went largely overlooked until this GameCube rerelease, which fixed a few glaring flaws (such as a ludicrously high enemy-encounter rate) and added a nice chunk of additional content. It may have come second-hand, but it's still one of the best RPGs on GameCube.

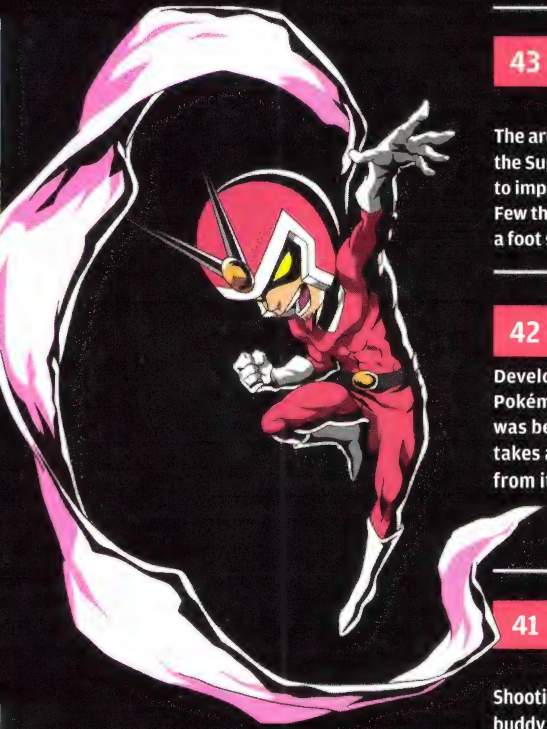
Top 5: Villains

1. Ganon
2. Fawful
3. Dr. Wily
4. Kefka
5. Albert Wesker

47 Mega Man 3

NES • Capcom • 1990

Mega Man 3 introduced a few very important elements to the series. In one game, we got Mega Man's slide ability, his robo-dog Rush, and his brother Proto Man. And Snake Man. Awesome, awesome Snake Man.



46 Viewtiful Joe

GameCube • Capcom • 2003

A bold new take on the side-scrolling beat-'em-up, Viewtiful Joe won us over with its innovative VFX powers, colorful cast of characters, and inspired cel-shaded aesthetic. Next up for Joe's creative staff is Wii U exclusive The Wonderful 101.

45 Super Smash Bros. Melee

GameCube • Nintendo • 2001

If there's one thing better than a fighting game that features all your favorite Nintendo heroes, it's a sequel that adds more characters, smoother controls, and deeper gameplay. Hardcore fans—us included—consider this the best game in the Super Smash Bros. series.

44 DuckTales

NES • Capcom • 1989

Even back in the 8-bit era, licensed games tended to disappoint. DuckTales was a very notable exception to the rule. Scrooge McDuck's quest to become richer than rich is filled with the kind of stellar platforming Capcom was known for at the time.

43 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles IV: Turtles in Time

Super NES • Konami • 1992

The arcade version of Turtles in Time was great; the Super NES adaptation was even better due to improved controls and new levels and bosses. Few things in gaming are more fun than tossing a foot soldier into the screen.

42 Drill Dozer

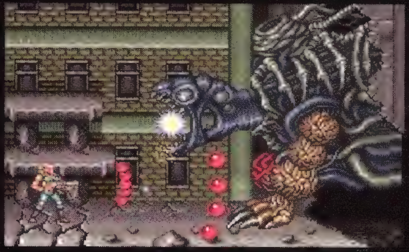
GBA • Nintendo • 2006

Developer Game Freak took a break from Pokémon to give us a platforming gem that was beautiful in its simplicity. Drill Dozer takes a single mechanic—drilling—and wrings from it every last drop of potential with masterful stage design and inventive boss battles.

41 Contra III: The Alien Wars

Super NES • Konami • 1992

Shooting aliens is fun. Shooting aliens with a buddy by your side is even better. And shooting aliens with a pal by your side in Contra III, a game chock-full of amazing (especially for the time) set pieces and Mode 7 graphics, is downright awesome.



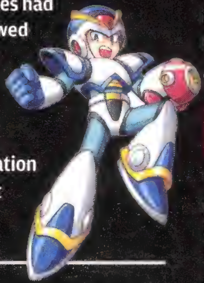
40 Contra

NES • Konami • 1988

Contra is probably best known for two things: the famous Konami code (which granted you 30 lives in Contra) and intense co-op action. There's nothing quite like racing a buddy up the waterfall in Stage 3—and then stealing his lives if you run out.

39 Mega Man X

Super NES • Capcom • 1994



For years, the Mega Man games had all looked the same and followed the same formula. Mega Man X, the first 16-bit Mega Man, brought new life to the franchise through improved graphics, new moves, exploration elements, and more. The first Mega Man X is still the best.

38 Astro Boy: Omega Factor

GBA • Sega • 2004

This is our most highly ranked game that's based on a licensed property, and for good reason. Omega Factor captures the essence of Astro Boy perfectly and melds it with developer Treasure's trademark brand of pulse-pounding action.

37 ActRaiser

Super NES • Enix • 1991

Publishers were a lot more willing to take chances on odd ideas in the 16-bit era; hence this strange fusion of a conventional side-scrolling action game with a simulation-style god game in which players built cities and performed miracles to protect their flock. Both parts were fun, and it certainly didn't hurt that the game boasted one of the most phenomenal soundtracks ever composed.

36 The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap

GBA • Nintendo • 2005

Although Link's Awakening started things off right, the Legend of Zelda series's portable installments have rarely been as satisfying as their console brethren. The Minish Cap beat the odds by copying everything that made A Link to the Past great: a colorful 2D world, an exploration-focused structure, cool items, and strong dungeon design. It wasn't the most innovative Zelda entry, but it was easily one of the most entertaining portable ones.

35 Metroid: Zero Mission

Game Boy Advance • Nintendo • 2004

This remake of Metroid improved upon the groundbreaking NES original in numerous ways, including vastly upgraded graphics and an in-game map. The new finale—which introduced Samus's Zero Suit—was pretty cool, too.

34 The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask

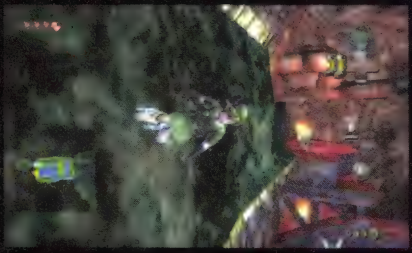
Nintendo 64 • Nintendo • 2000

An attempt to cash in on the success of Ocarina of Time by banging out a sequel in just over a year shouldn't have produced a masterpiece of a game. Although Majora's Mask has less content than most Zelda entries, it features a mind-bendingly brilliant structure that has players repeating the same days over and over to make incremental progress toward averting an apocalypse. It may be the most effective implementation of time travel in gaming.

33 The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess

Wii • Nintendo • 2006

Gamers around the world exploded with delight when Twilight Princess was unveiled in 2004, and when the game was released as a Wii launch title more than two years later, it lived up to the hype. Once players made it into the meat of the game, they found a huge and stunningly beautiful world to explore, powerfully cinematic event scenes to marvel at, and plenty of well-designed dungeons to take on.



32 Mario Kart 64

Nintendo 64 • Nintendo • 1997

Super Mario Kart showed us that Mario characters and kart racing go together like T-shirts and jeans. Mario Kart 64 took the concept to the next level, establishing the winning polygonal-kart-racing formula that continues to this day.

31 Soul Calibur II

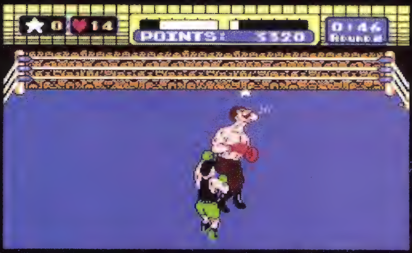
Game Cube • Namco • 2003

Weapons-based fighting games don't get much better than Soul Calibur II—it's got easy-to-learn controls, impressive graphics, and a diverse roster of combatants that includes Link from The Legend of Zelda. What more could a fighting fan want?

30 Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!!

NES • Nintendo • 1987

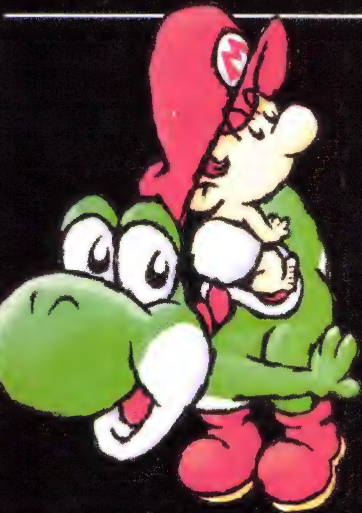
With gameplay that more closely resembled a puzzle game than a typical sports title, Punch-Out!! could be enjoyed by anyone. Its large, personality-filled character sprites helped make this one of the most memorable NES experiences.



29 Resident Evil

GameCube • Capcom • 2002

Video games are remade all the time, but few have managed to improve upon their source material without alienating existing fans; the GameCube remake of Resident Evil pulled that off in spades. It featured a beautifully rerendered mansion, newly aggressive zombies, and just enough changes to the story and structure to keep veteran players on the edges of their seats.



28 Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island

Super NES • Nintendo • 1995

Of all the new features in Super Mario World, none were more popular than the rideable steeds known as Yoshis, and it was no surprise to see them take center stage in Super Mario World's only sequel. But Yoshi's Island was way more than a Mario-series spin-off; it introduced a radically new style of gameplay (firing eggs at any angle), an unusual new objective (protecting a baby Mario), and a beautiful new visual style based on painted artwork.

27 Super Castlevania IV

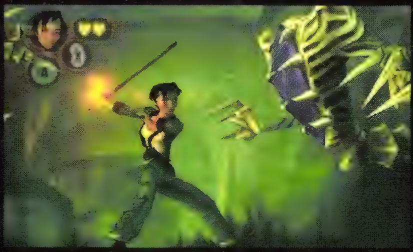
Super NES • Konami • 1991

The Castlevania series had always had strong gameplay, but its Gothic settings and brilliantly composed soundtracks never really popped until they were reborn with the enhanced power of the Super NES. The developers went a little crazy with the platform's Mode 7 technology—every boss encounter was packed with background scaling and rotation effects for no real reason—but that only adds to its cool, campy charm.

26 Beyond Good & Evil

GameCube • Ubisoft • 2003

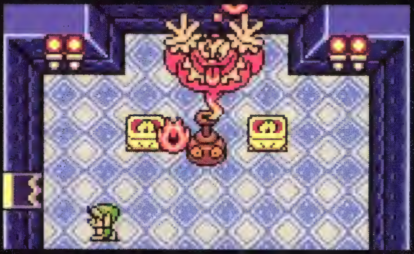
Whenever someone puts together a list of overlooked gems (including us), Beyond Good & Evil invariably appears near the top. Perhaps because of that, this wonderful game has gradually garnered the recognition it deserves, to the extent that a sequel no longer seems like an impossibility.



25 The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening DX

Game Boy Color • Nintendo • 1998

Imaginative, emotional, and packed with quirky humor, Link's Awakening proved that a handheld Zelda could be just as epic as its console counterparts. The DX version for Game Boy Color even managed to improve upon the black-and-white original.



24 Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga

GBA • Nintendo • 2003

All three Mario & Luigi titles made our list, but the original remains our favorite. This madcap adventure is packed with fun locales, memorable characters (Fawful!), and some of the most hilarious writing in video game history.

23 Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow

DS • Konami • 2005

The office is split on which of Koji Igarashi's trilogy of Nintendo DS titles is the best, but all agree that Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow was the first truly great original game on the platform. With appealing settings, a memorable Michiru Yamane soundtrack, and a Metroid-style mix of free exploration and ability-based progressions, Dawn of Sorrow kicked off what would prove to be a fantastic era for the series.

22 Super Mario Bros. 2

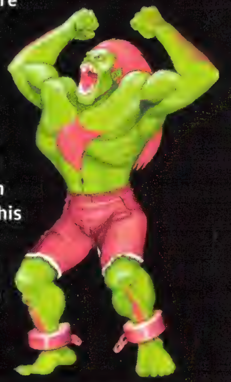
NES • Nintendo • 1998

Although it played quite differently than its predecessor, the new powers and ability to play as different characters (not to mention the catchy soundtrack) made this sequel a blast. Just watch out for the surprise ending!

21 Street Fighter II Turbo: Hyper Fighting

Super NES • Capcom • 1993

At the height of Street Fighter mania, when otherwise-sane people were paying $2,000 for arcade boards they could play at home, Capcom released this excellent Super NES port of Street Fighter II to massive success. It would prove to be a lot more than just a fad; 20 years later, this elegant, balanced, and attractive fighter can still liven up any party of video game enthusiasts.



Top 5: Most Influential

1. **Super Mario Bros.**
2. The Legend of Zelda
3. Dragon Warrior
4. Street Fighter II: The World Warrior
5. Super Mario 64

20 Paper Mario: The Thousand-Year Door

Nintendo 64 • Nintendo • 2004

Witty writing, unique aesthetics, and engaging gameplay are all hallmarks of the Paper Mario franchise. Paper Mario: The Thousand-Year Door showcases these qualities so well that no other entries in the series have topped this title yet.

19 Chrono Trigger

Super NES • Squaresoft • 1995

There are many reasons why Chrono Trigger is so great, but chief among them are the empowering time-traveling gameplay and the incredible soundtrack. As a collaboration between some of the best creators in the biz, it's no surprise that this game ended up an RPG masterpiece.

18 Super Mario 3D Land

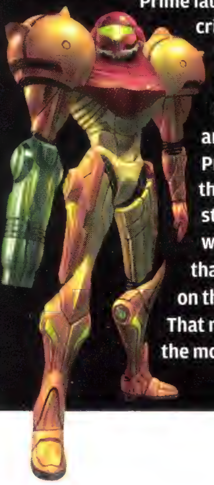
N3DS • Nintendo • 2011

One of the great things about the Mario series is that its many incarnations means there's a variety of gameplay styles to return to. After so many recent entries focused on fast, party-style action (à la New Super Mario Bros.) or exploration (like Super Mario Galaxy), Super Mario 3D Land's NES-style deliberate gameplay and dense level design was new and exciting again. Full of stunning 3D effects that actually affected gameplay, players couldn't ask for more from the N3DS handheld's inaugural Mario game.

17 Metroid Prime

GameCube • Nintendo • 2002

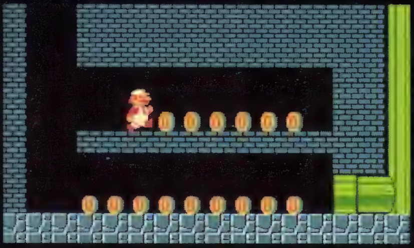
Despite great controversy over Metroid being remade as a first-person shooter by a newly formed Western development studio, Metroid Prime launched to widespread critical acclaim for its deft balance of classic Metroid play mechanics and first-person exploration and combat. The Metroid Prime series proved that the FPS genre could support strategy and exploration as well as fast action—a lesson that to this day remains lost on the rest of the industry. That makes Metroid Prime all the more special.



16 Super Mario Bros.

NES • Nintendo • 1985

What more can we say about the original Super Mario Bros. that hasn't already been said? It defined a genre and made Mario into the superstar that he is today. Even now, we find saving the princess exhilarating.



15 Super Mario Galaxy 2

Wii • Nintendo • 2010

The first Super Mario Galaxy was so jam-packed with originality and gravity-defying fun that it seemed like no game could ever touch it—and then the sequel arrived, delivering fantastic new worlds, new power-up suits, and more platforming brilliance (plus the return of Yoshi!).

14 Super Mario 64

Nintendo 64 • Nintendo • 1996

On a list of the most impactful games ever made, Super Mario 64 could vie for the top spot. It may not have been the first 3D game most people played, but it was light years beyond those such as Star Fox and the early releases on the Nintendo 64's rival platforms. Its controls and graphics haven't aged well, but this groundbreaking title proved that Mario's trademark mix of platforming and exploration could work in 3D, and that the shift in perspective could create jaw-dropping moments that would never be possible in just two dimensions.

13 Elite Beat Agents

DS • Nintendo • 2006

This quirky rhythm game is perfectly designed to take advantage of the DS system's dual screens and touch capabilities. Just don't make us play the Christmas stage again. We get all weepy.

Top 5: Endings

1. **Metal Gear Solid: Snake Eater 3D**
2. Professor Layton and the Unwound Future
3. Nine Hours, Nine Persons, Nine Doors
4. Silent Hill: Shattered Memories
5. Klonoa

12 The Legend of Zelda

NES • Nintendo • 1987

The Legend of Zelda was a rare NES title inspired not by a specific style of play or setting, but an attempt to capture the thrill of exploration and discovery. It succeeded with aplomb, ushering in a new style of gameplay built more on finding secrets and solving puzzles than on fast-reflex fighting. Beyond standing as a triumph in its own right, many of the creations inspired by the original Legend of Zelda rank among the greatest games ever made.

11 The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword

Wii • Nintendo • 2011

Built from the ground up for Wii, Skyward Sword realized the potential of motion controls like few other titles and stood out as one of the console's most beautiful games. It also boasts some of the best storytelling in the series, as well as our favorite take on the Zelda character to date.

10 Resident Evil 4

GameCube • Capcom • 2005

Leon's arrival at the first village. Facing off against El Gigante. The mine-cart ride. Going knife to knife with Krauser. Hearing the merchant tell you he'll buy at a high price. Resident Evil 4 is packed with one memorable moment after the next, delivering an ambitious reinvention of survival-horror that blew away even our sky-high expectations. That accomplishment is even more impressive given the game's long, tumultuous development cycle, during which the creative team experimented with four different approaches that were ultimately scrapped. The final product is incredibly immersive and masterfully paced, and a number of big-name developers have cited it as a major influence on their work. It's just a shame that director Shinji Mikami ended up having to cut off his own head.

09 The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker

GameCube • Nintendo • 2003

The wonderful thing about The Legend of Zelda games is that they start small and unfold into something grand. The Wind Waker exemplifies this better than many of its siblings: what starts off as a seemingly young-gamer-skewing adventure (due to its cartoony cel-shaded visual style) concludes with one of the most shocking moments in the entire franchise in which—spoiler alert—Link finishes off Ganondorf by stabbing him through the forehead.

08 Super Metroid

Super NES • Nintendo • 1994

The first two Metroid games are great and all, but if ever a sequel refined the concepts and mechanics of its predecessors, it's this one. Slowly building up Samus's repertoire of abilities as you explore Zebes is extremely satisfying, and the game features some of the most exciting boss encounters on the Super NES. It's a testament to this title's longevity that nearly 20 years later, people are still playing the game to find the fastest path through the adventure.

07 Super Mario Bros. 3

NES • Nintendo • 1990

With a world map, inventory screen, imaginative new power-ups, and scores of secrets to uncover, Super Mario Bros. 3 broke from the series's arcade-action roots and expanded its breadth dramatically. SMB3 also delivered some of the tightest and most challenging level design ever seen in a Mario game. By offering a deeper action experience than could be found in arcades and selling millions of copies for it, Super Mario Bros. 3 marked a turning point for not just the series, but the entire gaming industry.

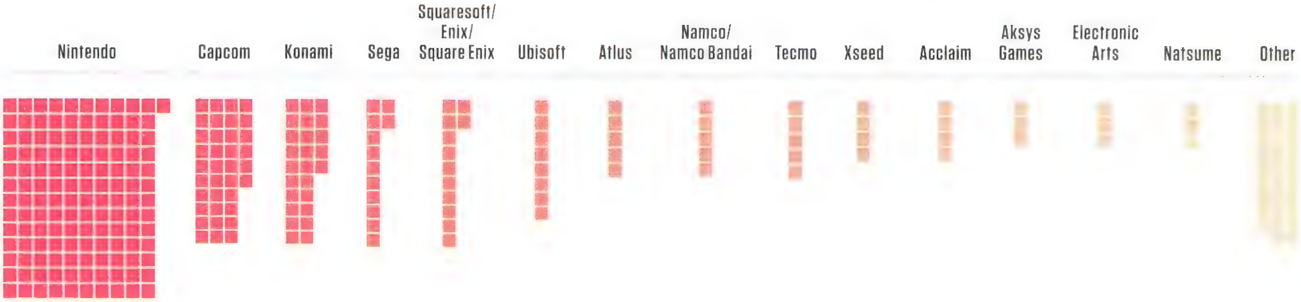
06 Mega Man 2

NES • Capcom • 1989

Mega Man 2 is an almost-perfect video game. A labor of love by the folks at Capcom, this sequel refines the action-packed weapon-swiping formula of its predecessor while adding numerous enhancements (such as a password system). The result is a game with brilliant level design, cool weapons, distinctive bosses, pristine control, and some of the best graphics and music on the NES. And don't get us started on how cool the final battle is between Mega Man and Dr. Wily.

By the Numbers: Publishers

The NP top 285, separated by publisher.



05 Super Mario World

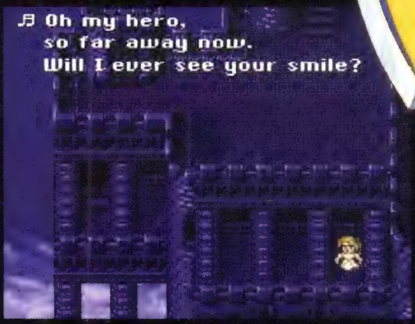
Super NES • Nintendo • 1991

Is there any sweeter experience as a game fan than bringing home a new Nintendo console and digging into its Mario launch title? Super Mario World delighted new Super NES owners by living up to its name and offering an entire world of delights to explore, with a vast overworld map and countless new game mechanics that have since become series mainstays. It used the new effects of the Super NES—things like transparency, scaling, and rotation—tastefully and impactfully, making it the perfect introduction to one of the greatest game machines ever made.

04 Final Fantasy III

Super NES • Squaresoft • 1994

Stunning graphics, a beautiful soundtrack, and a large and memorable cast made Final Fantasy VI (then known as Final Fantasy III) the franchise's finest moment on a Nintendo platform. This was one of the first RPGs to attempt to tell a story through playable set pieces instead of dialogue and moving sprites alone, and legions of RPG fans remember the game's iconic opera-house and ghost-train segments to this day. This was a pivotal point in the Final Fantasy series's evolution from being focused on gameplay and exploration to being focused on storytelling. Many fans feel Final Fantasy III was the last game to strike a good balance between the two.



♬ Oh my hero,
so far away now.
Will I ever see your smile?

Top 5: Franchises

1. **Mario (34 games)**
2. The Legend of Zelda (15 games)
3. Mega Man (8 games)
4. Final Fantasy (8 games)
5. Castlevania (8 games)

03 Super Mario Galaxy

Wii • Nintendo • 2007

It's a given that Mario games are great. Peruse this list, and you'll find plentiful examples of this fact—and you'll see that Super Mario Galaxy stands atop them all. The reasons are manifold: the jaw-dropping visuals illustrate the graphical abilities of the Wii console; the rock-solid controls make exploring the galaxy a joy; and Rosalina's storybook sequences give you an intriguing, compelling reason to keep playing. These qualities and more make Super Mario Galaxy a gaming masterpiece.

02 The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past

Super NES • Nintendo • 1992

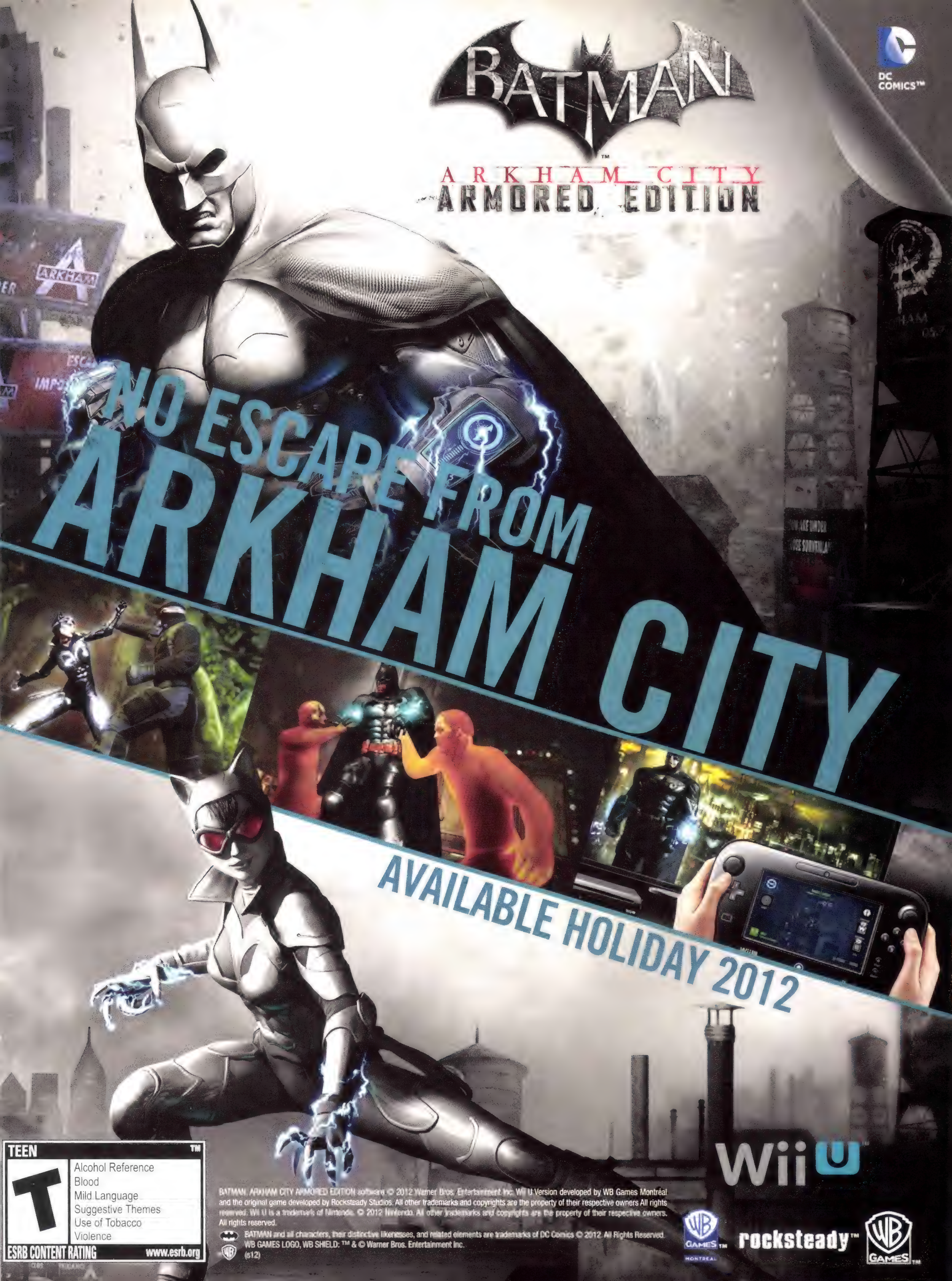
The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past introduced dozens of series mainstays (the Hookshot, the ocarina, heart pieces), but is perhaps more memorable for the degree to which it perfected the satisfying formula of the Zelda series. The game nailed the balance between open-world exploration and scripted storytelling, between familiarity and freshness, and between satisfying challenge and well-paced progression. Its innovative Light World/Dark World concept was one of the most imaginative hooks to a video game ever, and is still being imitated today.

01

The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time

Nintendo 64 • Nintendo • 1998

Whereas A Link to the Past perfected the series's core mechanics and structure, Ocarina of Time added a sense of dramatic scale and cinematic sweep that wasn't possible in the series's 2D entries. A spectacularly innovative game, Ocarina of Time pioneered methods for dealing with the control and camera issues that had bedeviled developers of 3D software for years. What's most impressive is that it managed to navigate the incredibly difficult transition from 2D to 3D while delivering the series's finest story, most memorable dungeons, and a main quest of then-unprecedented length. This is the quintessential entry in what has become gaming's most critically beloved series.


BATMAN
ARKHAM CITY
ARMORED EDITION
DC COMICS
NO ESCAPE FROM
ARKHAM CITY
AVAILABLE HOLIDAY 2012
Wii U
rocksteady
WB GAMES MONTREAL
WB GAMES

TEEN
T
Alcohol Reference
Blood
Mild Language
Suggestive Themes
Use of Tobacco
Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

BATMAN: ARKHAM CITY ARMORED EDITION software © 2012 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. Wii U Version developed by WB Games Montréal and the original game developed by Rocksteady Studios. All other trademarks and copyrights are the property of their respective owners All rights reserved. Wii U is a trademark of Nintendo. © 2012 Nintendo. All other trademarks and copyrights are the property of their respective owners. All rights reserved.

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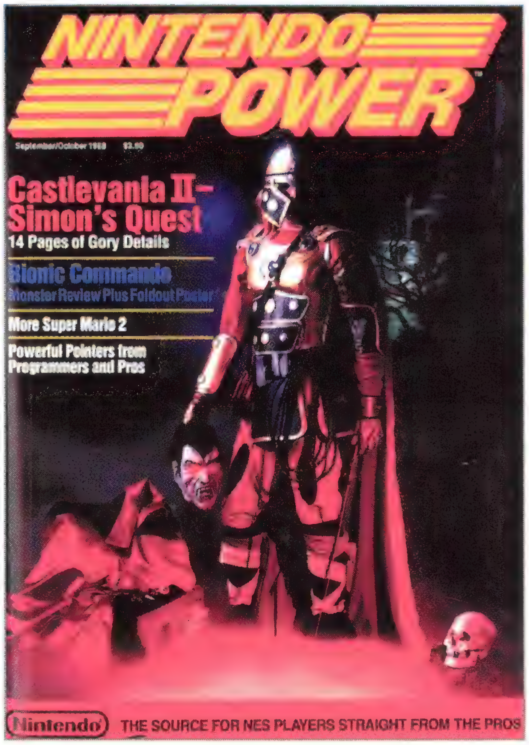
WB GAMES LOGO, WB SHIELD: ™ & © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.
(s12)

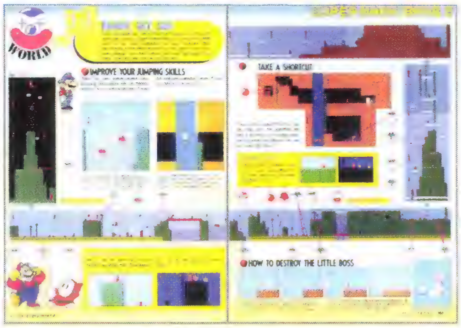
GREAT MOMENTS IN POWER

Celebrate the end of an era with a look back at nearly 25 years of Nintendo Power.

In the late 1980s, during the height of the Nintendo Entertainment System's popularity, the masterminds at Nintendo had a vision—a way to interact with fans and enable them to get the most out of their Nintendo products. Back then, there was no standard way of disseminating the latest video game news, and although Nintendo had been publishing a quarterly Fun Club Newsletter, it wasn't enough. Nintendo wanted to provide gaming info on a much greater scale, giving their enthusiastic fan base a way to find out what was coming next in the world of Nintendo and helping them maximize their enjoyment of current games. The result, of course, was Nintendo Power, a then-bimonthly magazine chock-full of previews, strategies, maps, and news on all things Nintendo. The first issue was released in the summer of 1988, with a circulation of 3.6 million, and the rest, as they say, is history.

The gaming landscape has evolved a lot since then. The NES gave way to the Super NES, Nintendo 64, GameCube, Wii, and now the Wii U console. Games are no longer confined to TVs; many of the best titles can be carried with you and be played anyplace, anytime. Wired controllers are a thing of the past, and Control Pads and buttons have been joined by touch screens and motion controls. And Nintendo Power was there through it all. Though the magazine's time has drawn to a close, it's impossible to forget the amazing games, monumental events, and Nintendo-related craziness that have appeared in these pages. So sit back, relax, and take a nostalgic look back at Nintendo Power's 24-plus-year history. ➡


NINTENDO POWER
September/October 1988 $3.50
Castlevania II–Simon's Quest
14 Pages of Gory Details
Bionic Commando
Monster Review Plus Foldout Poster
More Super Mario 2
Powerful Pointers from Programmers and Pros
Nintendo
THE SOURCE FOR NES PLAYERS STRAIGHT FROM THE PROS


IMPROVE YOUR JUMPING SKILLS
TAKE A SHORTCUT
HOW TO DESTROY THE LITTLE BOSS

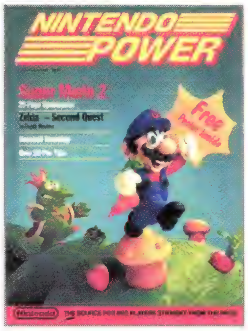
Captain Nintendo
This issue: The origin of Captain Nintendo, the "birth" of the Mother Brain, and the beginning of...the promise
Part I

[Left] The Vol. 2 cover is fondly remembered for giving kids nightmares. [Below] Yes, *that* Cliff Blezinski.

PLAYERS FORUM

Cliff Blezinski ▸	North Andover, MA ▸	9,999,950
Jayson Burkel ▸	Allen, TX ▸	9,999,950
Leon Derst ▸	Springfield, OH ▸	9,999,950
Alan Frank ▸	Medford, MN ▸	9,999,950
Jeff Hacker ▸	Columbus, OH ▸	9,999,950
Jason Harens ▸	Hamilton, IL ▸	9,999,950
Erik Hayme ▸	Hood River, OR ▸	9,999,950
Jeremy Klamer ▸	Shawnee, KS ▸	9,999,950
David Madden ▸	Rockford, IL ▸	9,999,950
Ellen Majewski ▸	Stratford, CT ▸	9,999,950
Jeff Marsden ▸	Pekin,IL ▸	9,999,950
Ricardo Morales ▸	Springfield, NJ ▸	9,999,950
Jon Plendler ▸	Indianapolis, IN ▸	9,999,950
Mary Phong ▸	Baltimore, MD ▸	9,999,950
Jason Reynolds ▸	Chesterfield, MO ▸	9,999,950
Stephen Richardson ▸	Irvine, KT ▸	9,999,950
Dave Stayner ▸	Niagra Falls, NY ▸	9,999,950
Mark Wilkinson ▸	Salisbury, MA ▸	9,999,950
John Yochim ▸	Sterling, VA ▸	9,999,950
Andrew Yocum ▸	Mishawaka,IN ▸	9,999,950
Eric Sargent ▸	Sumrall, MS ▸	114,700
Josh Dearmon ▸	Morrison, CO ▸	782,700

WRECKING CREW


NINTENDO POWER
Super Mario 2
Zelda – Second Quest
Free
Nintendo

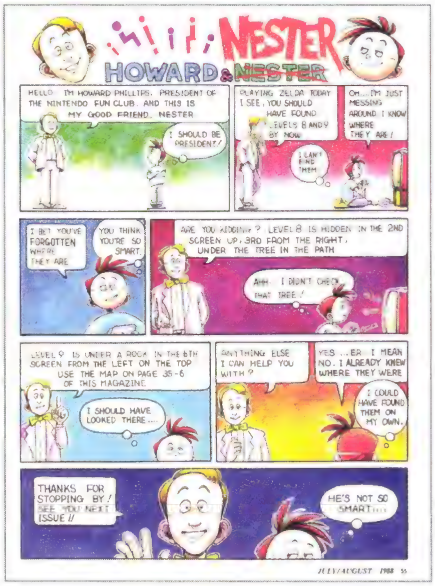
GET ON THE FAST TRACK
ATHENA
MUSHROOM MAGIC MEANS MAXIMUM STRENGTH

1988

If you were a gamer in 1988, then you're undoubtedly already very familiar with the first issue of Nintendo Power and its clay-sculpture Super Mario Bros. 2 cover. Vol. 1 set the tone for what Nintendo Power would be all about for years to come—massive strategy articles on the latest and most-popular games, full-color maps, cheat codes in Classified Information, gaming advice in Counselors' Corner, previews in Pak Watch, plus news, high scores, posters, contests, and more. For neophyte gamers, the maps were especially awesome—even if you didn't own the game in question and couldn't follow the accompanying tips, the maps often provided a way to thoroughly immerse yourself in the game's world. The first issue also introduced Nester, Nintendo Power's fictional mascot, who appeared in various places throughout the magazine and costarred with real-life Nintendo Fun Club president Howard Phillips in the Howard & Nester comic strip.

Following the strong start, the subsequent issues refined the formula, delivering big articles on games such as Castlevania II: Simon's Quest, Blaster Master, Bionic Commando, Life Force, and Golgo 13. In addition to covering the games, early issues of NP reported on game-playing celebrities, including Kirk Cameron and Jay Leno (back when he owned a mere six cars). Speaking of going beyond the games, Nintendo Power Vol. 3 is noteworthy for the inclusion of the first half of the "Captain Nintendo" short story, in which a Nintendo employee gains superpowers and must fight video game villains that have come to life; the piece helped inspire the *Captain N: The Game Master* animated series.

COUNSELORS' CORNER
SUPER MARIO BROS.
Where are the warp zones in Super Mario Bros. and how do I get to them?
Jump!
METROID
How do I defeat the Mini Bosses, Ridley and Kraid in Metroid?
OR
OR
KID ICARUS
In Kid Icarus, where do I find the Credit Card?
Write to:
Call us!


HOWARD & NESTER
NESTER
HELLO. I'M HOWARD PHILLIPS, PRESIDENT OF THE NINTENDO FUN CLUB. AND THIS IS MY GOOD FRIEND, NESTER
I SHOULD BE PRESIDENT!
PLAYING ZELDA TODAY I SEE. YOU SHOULD HAVE FOUND LEVELS 8 AND 9 BY NOW
I CAN'T FIND THEM
OH....I'M JUST MESSING AROUND. I KNOW WHERE THEY ARE!
I BET YOU'VE FORGOTTEN WHERE THEY ARE
YOU THINK YOU'RE SO SMART.
ARE YOU KIDDING? LEVEL 8 IS HIDDEN IN THE 2ND SCREEN UP, 3RD FROM THE RIGHT, UNDER THE TREE IN THE PATH
AHH. I DIDN'T CHECK THAT TREE!
LEVEL 9 IS UNDER A ROCK IN THE 6TH SCREEN FROM THE LEFT ON THE TOP USE THE MAP ON PAGE 35-6 OF THIS MAGAZINE
I SHOULD HAVE LOOKED THERE....
ANYTHING ELSE I CAN HELP YOU WITH?
YES ...ER I MEAN NO. I ALREADY KNEW WHERE THEY WERE
I COULD HAVE FOUND THEM ON MY OWN.
THANKS FOR STOPPING BY! SEE YOU NEXT ISSUE!!
HE'S NOT SO SMART....
JULY/AUGUST 1988 55

SUPER MARIO BROS. SUPER SHOW!

POWER PACKED

POWERGLOVE

UFORCE

SUPER CONTROL

[Right] Motion control circa 1989 was a terrifying sight to behold.

1989

Having established a recipe for success with its first few issues, Nintendo Power continued its winning ways in 1989. The NES hits kept coming, and so did previews and in-depth strategy articles in every issue of NP, including coverage of games such as Zelda II: The Adventure of Link (which was actually released in late 1988), Ninja Gaiden, Mega Man 2, DuckTales, Tetris, Dragon Warrior, and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. There was even an early look at Super Mario Bros. 3.

Upon hitting its first anniversary with Vol. 7, NP underwent some design changes, including the switch to a staple-bound format and the debut of the revamped letters column, dubbed Player's Pulse. For the most part, though, NP remained the same, and it wasn't long before there were more games to cover than ever before. The Game Boy made its first appearance in 1989, and NP was there to introduce the world to portable 8-bit gaming in all its monochromatic pea-green splendor; special sections of the magazine were carved out to cover the latest Game Boy titles.

Other highlights of 1989 include coverage of the before-their-time U-Force and Power Glove controllers (sorry about that; we know they sucked), reports on game-related entertainment such as *Captain N: The Game Master* and *The Wizard* (they were pretty awful, too), a story on the Invent the Ultimate Video Game Contest (which was won by future comic-book superstar J. Scott Campbell), and an April Fool's Day joke about a Nintendo dog-care game—some 16 years before Nintendogs became a worldwide phenomenon. The year also saw the first Nintendo Power Awards (or the Nesters, as they were often called back then), in which Zelda II took home the prize for 1988's overall game of the year, as determined by reader votes.

PAK WATCH

A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE OF NES GAME PAKS!!

SUPER MARIO BROS. 3

PAK WATCH

GAME BOY!

NEW COMPACT VIDEO GAME SYSTEM!

[Below] That's not a board game; it's the Consumer Electronics Show, a veritable cornucopia of mindblowing gaming goodness.

Link sets off to meet his destiny.

Link first visits Rauru.

Overall

THE ADVENTURE OF LINK

THE ULTIMATE VIDEO GAME

LOCKART

Jeffrey Scott Campbell unlocks his imagination

On Day 2

On Day 3

START

NINTENDO

GOAL

WORLD 1-1
WORLD 1-2
WORLD 1-3

STRATEGY
NINTENDO POWER
GUIDE
SUPER MARIO BROS. 3
84 pages of maps, tactics and power plays!

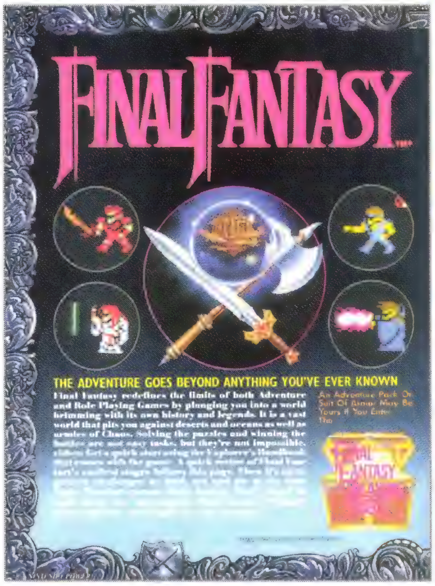
THE MAKING OF SUPER MARIO BROS. 3
PLANNING GAME PLAY
PROGRAMMING

Super Mario Bros. 3 received tons of coverage in Nintendo Power in 1990. And for good reason—it was pretty much the biggest game ever!

1990 Whether you were saving Gotham City in Batman, blasting through alien hordes in Super C, exploring the amazing realms of Final Fantasy, unlocking the zany mysteries of Maniac Mansion, or busting viruses in Dr. Mario, Nintendo Power was there to help you achieve victory. The biggest game of the year, though—in fact, at the time, you could argue that it was the biggest game ever—was Super Mario Bros. 3. A return to the Koopa-stomping, mushroom-snagging, fireball-throwing, princess-rescuing action that made Mario a household name, Super Mario Bros. 3 was a monumental release for the NES, and it was accompanied by loads of NP coverage, including a unique behind-the-scenes look at the creation of the game in Vol. 10, and a big cover story in Vol. 11. Unsurprisingly, when Nintendo Power went monthly in the middle of the year, Super Mario Bros. 3 was there—Vol. 13 was a strategy guide dedicated entirely to Mario's latest adventure. Starting with that volume, every other issue of NP was a full-length strategy guide; subsequent guides were devoted to Ninja Gaiden II: The Dark Sword of Chaos, the original Final Fantasy, and four-player NES games.

1990 also introduced Nintendo Power's Now Playing reviews section, which was initially little more than a list with scores. More importantly, the year generated one of the most awesome promo offers in the history of magazines: new NP subscribers were given a free copy of Dragon Warrior for the NES! The promotion produced about half a million new subs. And speaking of cool free games, readers had an opportunity to win the highly desirable Nintendo World Championship Game Pak via the Player's Poll contest in Vol. 14; these days the game sells for thousands of dollars on the collector's market. Meanwhile, NP mascot Nester broke out of the printed page and made his first in-game appearance in NES Play Action Football. And even more excitement was just around the corner; 1990 brought the first coverage of Nintendo's upcoming 16-bit Super Famicom system—which would be reborn in North America as the Super NES.

HOME SWEET HOME
IT ALL STARTS HERE


FINAL FANTASY
THE ADVENTURE GOES BEYOND ANYTHING YOU'VE EVER KNOWN

SECOND PRIZE

Second prize winners will get an exclusive NWC game cartridge featuring Super Mario Bros., Rad Racer and Tetris. These carts are just like those used in the NWC! With one of these you can form your own neighborhood competitions and prove who's the best Nintendo player around!

MEGA MAN III
NEW ROBOT ENEMIES! NEW ALIEN WORLDS!

NES JOURNAL
Super FamiCom Announced In Japan

SUPER NES PREVIEW

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

THIS MONTH'S LINEUP
SUPER MARIO WORLD
GRADIUS III
ACTRAISER

SUPER MARIO WORLD

THE SUPER NES STRUTS ITS STUFF, BEGINNING WITH THE HUGE WORLD OF SUPER MARIO

THE SUPER MARIO SERIES
JUST KEEPS GETTING BIGGER AND BETTER

SUPER MARIO WORLD

THE SUPER NES MAKES A HUGE SUPER MARIO WORLD POSSIBLE

SUPER FAMICOM SHOWCASE

Hot News

The Super NES Is On Its Way!!!

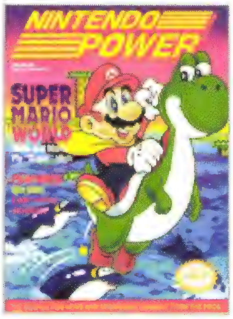
During the Las Vegas CES, Nintendo of America Inc. called a special press conference to announce that the next generation, 16-bit Super NES would be introduced in America in September of 1991! Due to the huge demand for this system in both Japan and the U.S., quantities will likely be limited at first. Production will be increased in 1992 to fill as much of the demand as possible. We'll let you know more in next month's issue!

The actual appearance of the American Super NES will be different from the Japanese Super FamiCom (pictured above), but no photos of the U.S. version were available at press time.

NINTENDO POWER

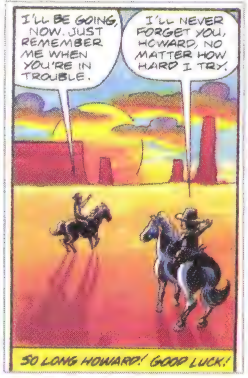
MEGA MAN IN DR. WILY'S REVENGE

Super NES Previews!



NINTENDO POWER

SUPER MARIO WORLD



I'LL BE GOING NOW. JUST REMEMBER ME WHEN YOU'RE IN TROUBLE.
I'LL NEVER FORGET YOU, HOWARD, NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY.
SO LONG HOWARD! GOOD LUCK!

After Howard Phillips left Nintendo [left], his pal Nester got a comic strip all to himself [below].

PULSE

NESTER'S ADVENTURES

BATTLETOADS

Here's The Waydigo!

Mad, Bad And Crazy!

1991

1991 is best remembered for one thing in the world of Nintendo: the release of the Super Nintendo Entertainment System, better known as the Super NES. Featuring vastly superior graphics and sound, enhanced memory and processing power, and plenty of hardware tricks that could provide new gaming experiences, the Super NES was the natural evolution of Nintendo gaming. Of course, Nintendo Power provided as much coverage as it could, starting with looks at the Super Famicom, followed by the official announcement of the Super NES in Vol. 21, then plenty of hardware features and game previews as the system's launch neared. Super Mario World became the first Super NES game to get a cover feature (in Vol. 28), and games like F-Zero, Pilotwings, ActRaiser, and Final Fantasy II commanded attention. But Nintendo's other systems weren't ignored; Vol. 25 played host to a gargantuan 36-page feature on Tradewest's NES beat-'em-up Battletoads (perhaps the biggest article ever created for a single game in NP, not counting strategy guides), and Vol. 27 devoted the cover to a Game Boy title for the first time (specifically, Mega Man: Dr. Wily's Revenge). Other highlights included technical articles on the NES and Game Pak memory chips; an explanation of the Miracle Piano Teaching System (take that, Rock Band!); a memorable Player's Pulse photo of a Game Boy that got melted (and still worked!) during Operation Desert Storm; an Ultimate Game Boy Design Contest; and a fond farewell to spokesman Howard Phillips, who left Nintendo after 10 years to join Lucasfilm's games division. With Phillips's departure, the Howard & Nester comic strip was retitled Nester's Adventures starting in Vol. 26.

ULTIMATE GAME BOY DESIGN CONTEST

FIRST PRIZE

RUNNERS UP

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

THE INSIDE STORY OF NES

HARDWARE TECHNICAL ARTICLE

THE NES CONTROL DECK

THE COMPUTER BRAIN

72 PIN CONNECTOR

RF MODULATOR

CONTROLLERS

NES MOTHERBOARD

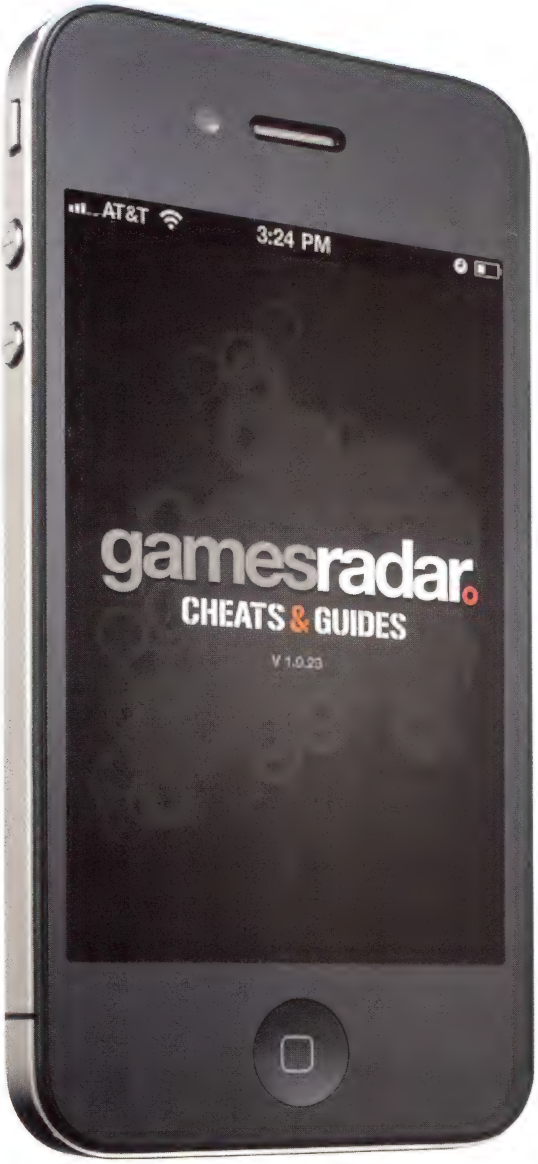
THE PPU

THE CPU

“★★★★★”

Amazing app, and it's FREE!

by Vitsnuklz



“★★★★★
THE BEST GUIDES
on the internet...
ALL IN ONE PLACE”
by Samael76

“★★★★★
Thank you GamesRadar for
FEEDING MY
ADDICTION”
by Poconoscott

“★★★★★
GamesRadar is
FULL OF WIN”
by Marcello Almaguer

“★★★★★
AWESOMESAUCE!
Great app. I love!”
by June Martin

gr.

Think guidebooks are too heavy? Is your computer too far away from your console? Do you hate standing up? If so, download our gift to couch potatoes!

gamesradar. www.gamesradar.com

Future www.futureus.com

MARIO PAINT
Just Picture This

And now for something completely different. Mario Paint, Nintendo's newest Super NES release, is a departure from the action, adventure and sports games you might expect. It's an innovative graphics program that lets you design scenes, compose music, create animation, and even combine all three. It's as simple or complex as you want to make it, so it's tons of fun for all ages and skill levels.

GEORGE & ROB'S
NOW PLAYING
JAN. 1991
GEORGE
ROB
GEORGE
ROB
GEORGE
ROB
GEORGE

Super Castlevania IV

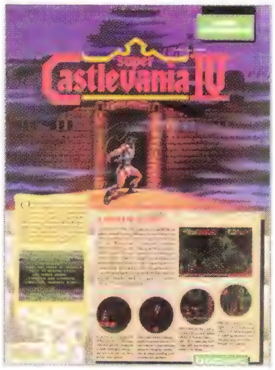
Super NES Technology Update
CD
Cosmic Osmo

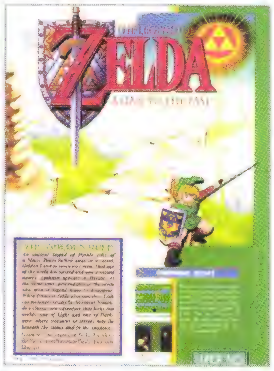
[Above-right] Everyone was excited about CD-ROM technology in 1992, but this article ended up being severely premature.

1992

With three Nintendo systems bringing the fun, there was no shortage of great games to read about in 1992. From Mega Man 4 and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III on the NES to Super Mario Kart and Mario Paint on Super NES to Super Mario Land 2: 6 Golden Coins and Kirby's Dream Land on Game Boy, there were great games everywhere players looked. Two of the most anticipated—and heavily covered—were The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past (which was, strangely enough, once referred to as Zelda IV in the pages of the magazine) and the Super NES adaptation of arcade megahit Street Fighter II: The World Warrior. Players also looked toward the future—an article in Vol. 35 touted the benefits of the eventually cancelled Super NES CD-ROM, and a piece in Vol. 37 focused on arcade games, many of which the editors hoped would eventually be ported to Nintendo systems. (Some were; most weren't.)

As for the magazine itself, 1992 ushered in a new look for Nintendo Power, featuring more angular designs, color coding for each game system, and a cleaner appearance overall. And the changes weren't just cosmetic. Vol. 32 introduced ongoing manga strips based on the Super Mario series and A Link to the Past and debuted the revamped Now Playing reviews section. Described as "two guys' opinions on the latest releases," the section involved NP editors George Sinfield and Rob Noel bantering about new releases, podcast-style. The controversial section was clearly ahead of its time, and the column reverted to a more traditional format a year later.


Super Castlevania IV


THE LEGEND OF ZELDA
A LINK TO THE PAST

RYU
A VERY WELL-ROUNDED FIGHTER
TECHNIQUE FILE

NP'S COOLEST COVERS

Over the course of 285 issues of Nintendo Power, there have been more than 300 covers once you include variants and subscriber-only versions. Here are our favorites.

NINTENDO POWER
EARTHWORM JIM

VOL. 67
Earthworm Jim is an inspiration to annelids everywhere.

WORLD'S FIRST Wii REVIEWS
NINTENDO POWER
The Dream of ZELDA

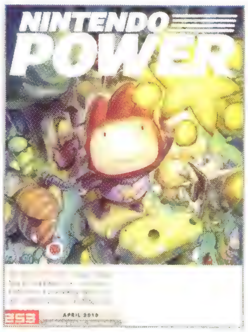
VOL. 211
It's hard to go wrong with The Legend of Zelda.

Wii
NINTENDO POWER
MIYAMOTO-SAN
SPIDERS, PIRATES, WIZARDS AND RATS
PICK A PERFECT PIXL!
MANA FOR RTS FANS
NiGHTS
JOURNEY OF DREAMS

VOL. 216
Fantasy takes flight against the gorgeous moon.

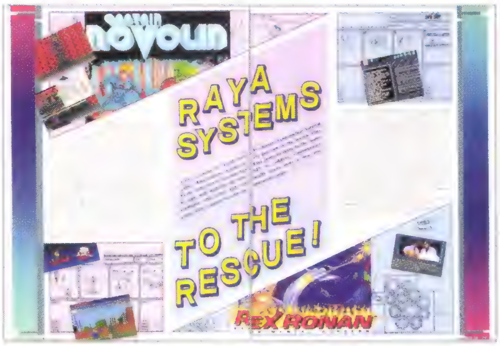
NINTENDO POWER
250th ISSUE

VOL. 250 (subscriber version)
Retro Mega Man is totally gnarly.


NINTENDO POWER
253
APRIL 2010

VOL. 253 (subscriber version)
Subtle warmth permeates this Super Scribblenauts art.

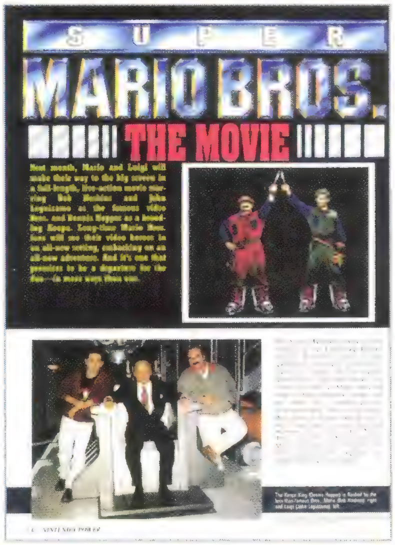
MORTAL KOMBAT
A DANGEROUS CONFLICT
SHANG TSUNG'S TOURNAMENT
JOHNNY CAGE
MORTAL KOMBAT
FIGHTING AS CAGE
SPECIAL MOVES
AGAINST CAGE
VS. GORO


CAPTAIN NOVOLIN
RAYA SYSTEMS TO THE RESCUE!
REX RONAN

[Above] Educational games Captain Novolin and Rex Ronan: Experimental Surgeon are 16-bit oddities.
[Left] Let the sweat fly! Blood or no blood, Mortal Kombat was one of 1993's most anticipated games.

1993

Star Fox was a pretty big deal for Nintendo in 1993, and the polygonal shooter got plenty of attention in NP, including previews, features, a comic strip, and a cover story. Even the Super FX chip—the microchip that made Star Fox's true 3D gameplay possible—received its own special coverage. As a polygonal game, however, Star Fox presented its own unique challenges for the magazine—you couldn't just show a 2D map built from screenshots to properly convey what the game was about, after all. Showcasing 3D games in a way suitable to NP's style would remain a puzzling task for years to come. Fighting games were huge business, as well; two of the year's biggest hits were Street Fighter II Turbo and Mortal Kombat, and both were heavily covered in NP. Other major games included The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening, Super Mario All-Stars, Battletoads in Battlemaniacs, and The Magical Quest Starring Mickey Mouse. But NP didn't just focus on the big names; it also covered lesser-known oddities like Captain Novolin and Rex Ronan: Experimental Surgeon, two Super NES educational games that were designed to entertain while teaching kids about diabetes and cigarettes, respectively. Additionally, NP readers got to hit the field in a new monthly Sports Scene section, unleash their inner mad scientists in a Mega Man boss-creation contest (of which two entries became actual Robot Masters in Mega Man 6), learn about the *Super Mario Bros.* theatrical film, and hear the early news about Nintendo's futuristic "Project Reality" hardware, which was being developed in collaboration with Silicon Graphics. It would be three years before the system was released as the Nintendo 64.

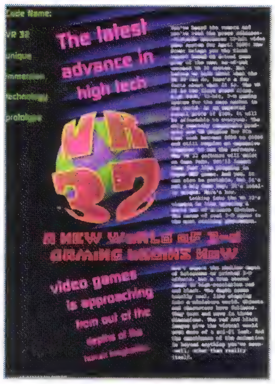

SUPER
MARIO BROS.
THE MOVIE

STARFOX
STAR FOX
CORNERIA
TOWERS DOWN
HELPING OUT
SUPPLY RING
WATCH YOUR SIX
ATTACK CARRIER

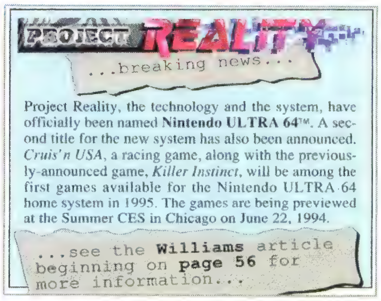
ZELDA
LINK'S AWAKENING

MEGA MAN ROBOT ENEMIES CONTEST
ROBOTS OF THE FUTURE

SPORTS SCENE
THE CHOICE OF CHAMPIONS
JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL '93 A NEW LINEUP OF OPTIONS DRAWS
SCORES BIG
PRO QUARTERBACK ARRIVES
FUTURE FOOTBALL


Code Name:
VR 32
unique
immersive
technology
prototype
The latest advance in high tech
VR 32
A NEW WORLD OF 3-D GAMING BEGINS NOW
video games is approaching from out of the depths of the human imagination

SUPER COLOR, SUPER OPTIONS, SUPER GAME BOY
ENHANCED GRAPHICS
THE FRAME MAKES THE GAME
SUPER GAME BOY GETS THE COLORS RIGHT
SUPER GAME BOY TODAY AND TOMORROW
EVERY GAME BOY TITLE CAN GET THE TREATMENT
MORE NEXT MONTH


PROJECT REALITY

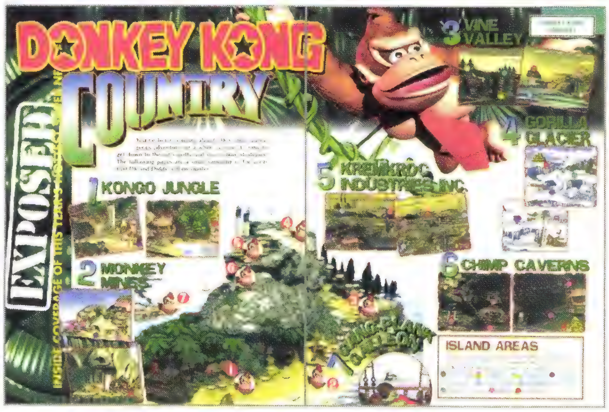
...breaking news...

Project Reality, the technology and the system, have officially been named **Nintendo ULTRA 64™**. A second title for the new system has also been announced. *Cruis'n USA*, a racing game, along with the previously-announced game, *Killer Instinct*, will be among the first games available for the Nintendo ULTRA 64 home system in 1995. The games are being previewed at the Summer CES in Chicago on June 22, 1994.

...see the **Williams** article beginning on **page 56** for more information...

[Above] Fans eagerly awaited every bit of news about Nintendo's 64-bit system.

FINAL FANTASY III
WHEN MAGIC AND TECHNOLOGY COLLIDE
A MYSTERIOUS PAST HAUNTS FUTURE GENERATIONS


DONKEY KONG COUNTRY
EXPOSED!
INSIDE COVERAGE OF THIS YEAR'S HOTTEST GAME
1 KONGO JUNGLE
2 MONKEY MINES
3 VINE VALLEY
4 GORILLA GLACIER
5 KREMKROC INDUSTRIES, INC.
6 CHIMP CAVERNS
ISLAND AREAS

1994

Nintendo Power started 1994 with a bang. The January issue featured a snazzy silver embossed cover of Mega Man X, and on the inside of the magazine readers were treated to previews of many of the year's biggest games, including Super Metroid, Wario Land: Super Mario Land 3, NBA Jam, and Ken Griffey Jr. Presents Major League Baseball, as well as a free set of Mega Man X pogs (remember those?), the first Power Supplies Catalog (which allowed readers to purchase exclusive Nintendo merchandise), and a nifty article on Japan-only games (some of which, such as Dragon Quest V, came stateside only recently). As the year progressed, there was plenty of exciting new game coverage (such as scoops on Super Street Fighter II, Mortal Kombat II, Donkey Kong for Game Boy, and Breath of Fire), as well as the latest electrifying hardware news: the release of the Super Game Boy (which allowed you to play Game Boy games on the Super NES), the evolution of the Project Reality system into the not-quite-finally named Nintendo Ultra 64, and the announcement of Nintendo's VR 32 portable 3D game system (which was later renamed Virtual Boy). Things really began to heat up on the Super NES front toward the end of the year with the release of some of the system's greatest titles. Super Punch-Out!!, Earthworm Jim, Final Fantasy III (known as Final Fantasy VI in Japan), and the earth-shattering Donkey Kong Country all garnered big coverage in Nintendo Power.

DRAGON BALLZ II
FINAL FANTASY II, III, V
SHOGI / IGO
DRAGON WARRIOR V
PACHINKO AND SLOTS
POLITICAL MAH JONG
THE REST OF THE PAKS

SUPER METROID
CHAPTER 1
RED ALARM!
ZZZANG
NOOO!
VAWHAM
YEOWW!

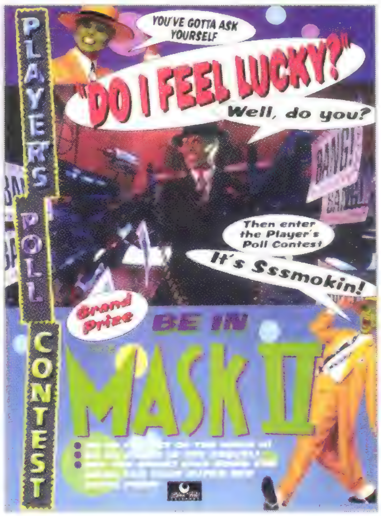
EPIC REVIEW
A Quantum Leap for Crono
Square Soft's ultimate epic takes you through time and space on a desperate mission to save the world.
CHRONO TRIGGER
From here to eternity... and back again
2300 A.D.
1000 A.D.
600 A.D.
12000 B.C.
65M B.C.

Nintendo
Ultra 64
Unveiled!
CHIPSET - COMPLETE
CONSOLE - COMPLETE
RELEASE DATE - APRIL 1996
ULTRA 64

KILLER INSTINCT

GAME BOY
What color is yours?
PLAY IT BLACK
PLAY IT RED

[Right] This contest didn't quite work out as planned.


PLAYERS POLL CONTEST
YOU'VE GOTTA ASK YOURSELF
"DO I FEEL LUCKY?"
Well, do you?
Then enter the Player's Poll Contest!
It's Sssmokin!
Grand Prize
BE IN
MASK II

1995

Nintendo Power readers discovered several design changes when they picked up their magazines in early 1995. Not only did Vol. 68 introduce a new logo for the publication and an edgier, more "extreme" look overall, but Vol. 70 saw the debut of the RPG-focused Epic Center section, which quickly grew to become one of the magazine's most popular destinations. It came at just the right time, too—1995 saw the release of all-time greats EarthBound and Chrono Trigger, as well as lesser titles such as Secret of Evermore, and an early look at Super Mario RPG: Legend of the Seven Stars. Meanwhile, there was plenty to report on in other parts of the Nintendo universe. The Game Boy was reborn in five colors (black, yellow, green, red, and clear) in the Play It Loud series; the Nintendo Ultra 64 continued to turn heads, even after it was delayed from its targeted 1995 release date; combo-crazy Killer Instinct, originally publicized as an Ultra 64 game, was ported to the Super NES; online gaming came to Nintendo systems by way of the Xband modem; and the experimental Virtual Boy system hit North American store shelves in August 1995. Amidst all that, NP still had time to discuss two games that never saw the light of day: Star Fox II and the Super NES version of GoldenEye 007 (which, of course, eventually ended up on Nintendo 64). Speaking of things that were never released, the Player's Poll in Vol. 77 offered the grand prize of being an extra in the movie *The Mask II*; the film got the axe after Jim Carrey turned down the starring role, although *Son of the Mask* did come out nearly 10 years later. To whoever won that contest: sorry.

FOUR COURAGEOUS KIDS FACE ULTIMATE TEST
TEEN HEROES DEFY GALACTIC FIEND
PSYCHIC YOUTH
TELEPATHY LINKED TO TEEN HERO
NESS TO SAVE EARTH
NESS'S FAMILY
MORE AMAZING POWERS

EPIC CENTER
THE NEW SOURCE FOR ADVENTURE GAMERS
SQUARE SOFT CALENDAR

HIGH TECH
3-DIMENSIONAL
32-BIT POWER
PLAY ANYWHERE
IMMERSION REALITY
Virtual Boy Opens the Door To a New World of Games
VIRTUAL BOY ARRIVES
In Your Face Gaming
IT'S IN YOUR FACE
RELEASE DATE: AUGUST 1995
SUGGESTED PRICE: $179
PACK IN GAME: MARIO'S TENNIS
PLAYING IS BELIEVING
VIRTUAL BOY
TRY IT BEFORE YOU BUY IT

SUPER MARIO 64
A GALLERY OF WONDERS
SLIDE ATTACK
SWIM
POUND THE GROUND
MARIO'S SUPER MOVES
BACK SOMERSAULT
WALL KICK
THROW
GIANT THROW
NINTENDO POWER

Princess Toadstool has invited Mario to her castle for a bite to eat, but what follows is no piece of cake! Follow Mario as he leaps into 15 vast worlds, plus many more secret areas. He'll find lava lakes, murky mazes and sunken ships. He'll ride a condor, squash giant bugs and dodge a vicious piano. Welcome to the wild worlds of Super Mario 64!

EPIC CENTER
CONTENTS
POCKET MONSTERS
SUPER DEVELOPERS WANTED (IN JAPAN)
FOR SUPER MARIO RPG 2

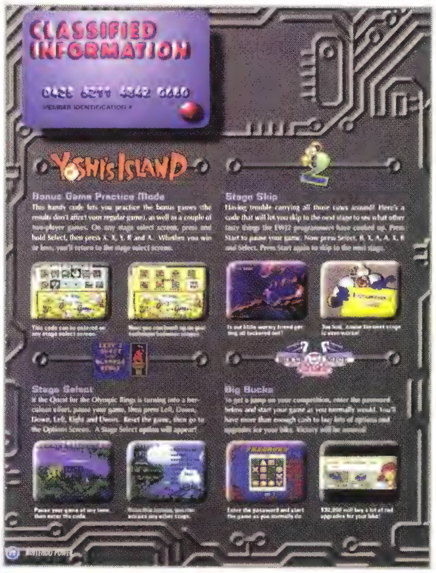
1996

Even more design changes were in store for Nintendo Power in 1996. Player's Pulse got an attitude-heavy new look, and, more significantly, Classified Information received a makeover that ditched the classic manila-envelope design (much to longtime readers' dismay). Coverage of Super NES, Game Boy, and even Virtual Boy games continued—some of the most notable being Super Mario RPG: Legend of the Seven Stars, Mega Man X3, Final Fight 3, and Donkey Kong Country 3—but most of the buzz was about the Nintendo 64, which was officially renamed from Nintendo Ultra 64 in early 1996. Throughout the course of the year there was loads of coverage about the system, its analog controller, and games such as the genre-redefining Super Mario 64, Pilotwings 64, Mario Kart 64, Wave Race 64, Star Fox 64 (see a trend here?), Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire, Turok: Dinosaur Hunter, and others. There were even a few early screens of the game then known as The Legend of Zelda 64. In handheld news, the sleek and stylish Game Boy Pocket popped up late in the year, while in Japan some upstart Game Boy game referred to as Pocket Monsters was causing a big hullabaloo. For the Nintendo Power editors, though, the most exciting news of the year might have been the release of Nester's Funky Bowling. Sure, it was a Virtual Boy title, but at long last NP's mascot had a video game of his very own!

THE FUN MACHINE
AN EXCLUSIVE WORLD TOUR OF THE FIRST NINTENDO 64 GAMES!

ACTUAL SIZE!
WOW
POCKET ON

[Right] The Classified Information redesign was the source of much controversy. Readers desperately missed the manila-envelope look.


CLASSIFIED INFORMATION
MEMBER IDENTIFICATION #
YOSHI'S ISLAND
Bonus Game Practice Mode
Stage Skip
Stage Select
Big Bucks
NINTENDO POWER

NESTER'S FUNKY BOWLING
Join Nester and his twin sister, Hester, for some frantic fun at the virtual bowling lanes!
NESTER FREAKS FOR FUNKY BOWLING
SCORE
STRIKE
The Real Thing
NESTER'S FUNKY BOWLING
VIRTUAL BOY
MODES OF PLAY
PRACTICE
CHALLENGE
BOWL
BIG OR SMALL, SOUTH PAW?
Practice

SUPER MARIO RPG
LEGEND OF THE SEVEN STARS
EPIC PREVIEW

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

Symphony OF THE Goddesses

A fond farewell from our team to yours...

The game will never be the same! Thanks for everything NP!
-Brian

Thanks for all the wonderful memories!
Susie Seiter

To my valued friend...
Thank-you!
♡ :)
Jacob B.

The Goddesses Thank You N.P!
Jeron Moore

I still use my original Top Secret Passwords book!
Chad Seiter

You LIVE ON IN OUR HEARTS...
LOVE YOU N.P.!
~Josh

Thanks for all of the memories, NP!
-Jeron

Grew up with NP, you rock!!
Thanks for all the years!
-Ted

Thank you for a remarkable 24 years!
JMP

NOW ON TOUR

Dec 08, 2012 - West Palm Beach, FL
Dec 09, 2012 - Miami, FL
Dec 14, 2012 - San Jose, CA
Jan 26, 2013 - Milwaukee, WI
Feb 1 & 2, 2013 - Sydney, AU
Mar 16, 2013 - Portland, OR

With more to come in 2013!

Thank you, NP
May we meet again in another life...

Thanks for all the good times, NP. It's been great!
-Tim S

Thank you, for everything.
-Houston

Thanks NP! You will be missed!
-Eric

WWW.ZELDA-SYMPHONY.COM

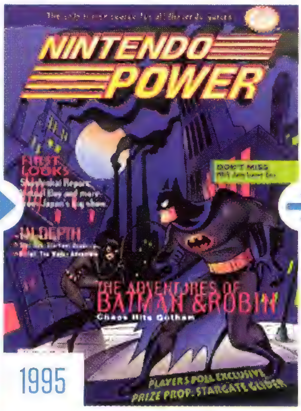
Nintendo
JASON MICHAEL PAUL productions inc.

TITLE TREATMENT

The Nintendo Power logo has changed a few times over the years, but all of them have featured "racing stripes" extending from the words. Fun fact: the stripes were inspired by the racetrack-shaped oval of the Nintendo corporate logo.

NINTENDO POWER
Super Mario 2
Zelda – Second Quest
Free

1988


NINTENDO POWER
FIRST LOOKS
IN DEPTH
THE ADVENTURES OF BATMAN & ROBIN
PLAYERS POLL EXCLUSIVE PRIZE PROP: STARGATE GLIDER

1995

ZELDA PREVIEW 2
NINTENDO POWER
GAME BOY ADVANCE ARRIVES!

2001

THE NEW POWER
NINTENDO POWER
HUGE E3 PREVIEW SECTION
A REVEALING LOOK INSIDE THE NEW ZELDA!
LINK'S SECRET IDENTITY

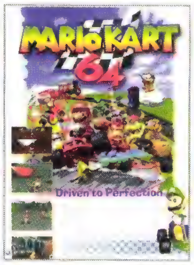
2005

1997

By Nintendo standards, 1997 was a fairly quiet year. The Nintendo 64 was finally out, but Super NES development had essentially dried up and the good ol' Game Boy was showing its age. In addition, the shift to 3D game worlds meant unavoidable changes to NP's coverage style—simple maps just didn't cut the mustard like they used to. Despite such challenges, there were numerous N64 titles to get excited about, including Mario Kart 64, Star Fox 64, and The Legend of Zelda 64, which looked better and better with each passing month, but seemed so excruciatingly far away. Nintendo's partnership with Rare continued to pay off, and Nintendo Power provided big coverage of unique destruction-oriented title Blast Corps, breakaway smash GoldenEye 007 (which set the standard for console first-person shooters for years to come), and holiday kart-racing hit Diddy Kong Racing. You could also find previews of Banjo-Kazooie and Conker's Quest for N64; the latter started life as a supercute platformer and went through countless changes before finally being released as Conker's Bad Fur Day in 2001. And that wasn't the only product with a rough development cycle to be found in NP's pages. Readers also got to hear about the ill-fated 64DD disk-drive add on for the N64 (it was released only in Japan and received minimal support) and EarthBound 64, which was intended as a 64DD title before being tragically canceled. On the brighter side, 1997 marked Nintendo Power's 100-issue celebration, which was commemorated with the "100 coolest codes ever," 100 tips for GoldenEye 007, and NP's list of the 100 best games of all time. Super Mario 64 was ranked #1; The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past took home #2. The issue also introduced a new reviews section that offered a definitive overall score for each game on a 10-point scale.

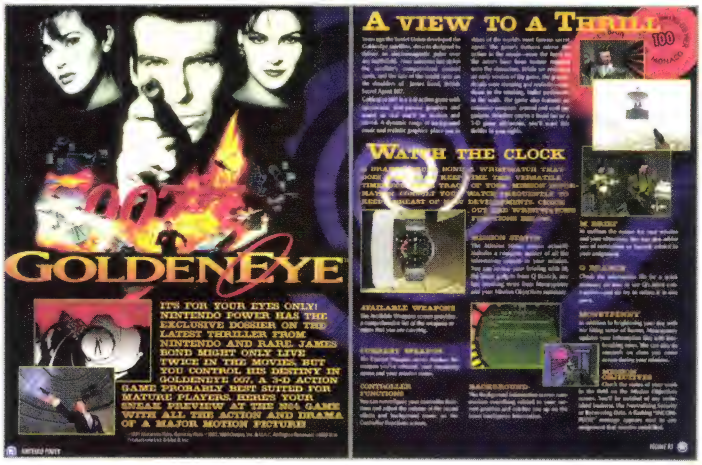
PAK WATCH
THE INSIDE SOURCE ON FUTURE GAMES
ZELDA 64
EXCLUSIVE FIRST LOOK

[Left] There's no such thing as too much Legend of Zelda coverage!

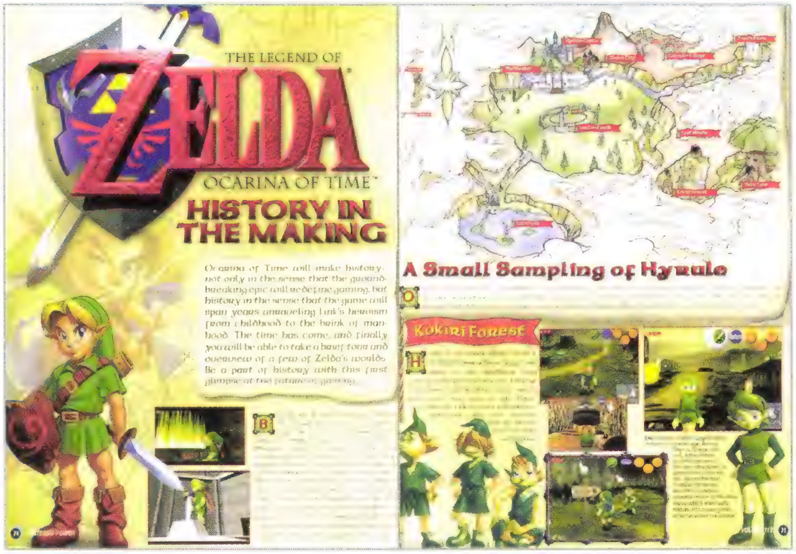

MARIO KART 64
Driven to Perfection

CONKER'S QUEST
A VERY RARE RODENT

THE 64DD HAS ENTERED THE ROOM.
IT'S REVOLUTIONARY

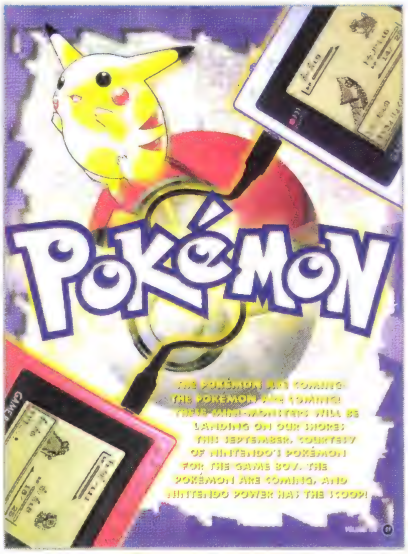

007
GOLDENEYE
A VIEW TO A THRILL
100
WATCH THE CLOCK

IT'S FOR YOUR EYES ONLY! NINTENDO POWER HAS THE EXCLUSIVE DOSSIER ON THE LATEST THRILLER FROM NINTENDO AND RARE. JAMES BOND MIGHT ONLY LIVE TWICE IN THE MOVIES, BUT YOU CONTROL HIS DESTINY IN GOLDENEYE 007, A 3-D ACTION GAME PROBABLY BEST SUITED FOR MATURE PLAYERS. HERE'S YOUR SNEAK PREVIEW AT THE N64 GAME WITH ALL THE ACTION AND DRAMA OF A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE!


THE LEGEND OF
ZELDA
OCARINA OF TIME
A Small Sampling of Hyrule
Kokiri Forest

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

Ocarina of Time will make history—not only in the sense that the groundbreaking epic will redefine gaming, but history in the sense that the game will span years unraveling Link's heroism from childhood to the brink of manhood. The time has come, and finally you will be able to take a brief tour and overview of a few of Zelda's worlds. Be a part of history with this first glimpse of the future of gaming.



THE POKÉMON ARE COMING! THE POKÉMON ARE COMING! THESE MINI-MONSTERS WILL BE LANDING ON OUR SHORES THIS SEPTEMBER, COURTESY OF NINTENDO'S POKÉMON FOR THE GAME BOY. THE POKÉMON ARE COMING, AND NINTENDO POWER HAS THE SCOOP!

1998

The Nintendo 64 was very well established by 1998, so it should come as little surprise that the bulk of the year's Nintendo Power coverage was dedicated to the system, starting with a feature on Nintendo Space World, the company's Japanese trade show. Highlights included a peek at Mario Artist, which would eventually be released for the Japan-only 64DD add-on. The other big title was Zelda 64, which would finally hit stores late in 1998 as the amazing The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time.

Throughout the year, we would see more and more of Link's time-traveling adventure, along with other big-name N64 titles such as F-Zero X, Paper Mario (referred to at the time as Super Mario RPG 2), Banjo-Kazooie, Star Wars Rogue Squadron, Turok 2, and Castlevania. We also got our first look at the infamous Superman game (commonly referred to as Superman 64). Certainly more interesting is the brief glimpse of Robotech: Crystal Dreams, an N64 game that would never see the light of day.

Despite the focus on the N64, portable gaming was far from ignored. A good amount of press was given to the Game Boy Camera, and there was much hype around the release of the Game Boy Color. The most important portable-gaming event of the year, however, was the US debut of a little game called Pokémon. The May issue included an extensive feature describing this new phenomenon that was just reaching these shores.

In July, Nintendo Power celebrated its 10th anniversary with a look back at the previous decade and some of the most important Nintendo-related events that occurred during that time.

POINT AND SHOOT
SPECIAL EFFECTS
NINTENDO

[Above] Digital photography has come a long way since 1998's Game Boy Camera.

The World Belongs to BANJO-KAZOOIE

NINTENDO POWER
TEN YEARS AGO
10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

INTRODUCING
GAME BOY COLOR
The Game Boy Color Makeover
There's a New Game Boy in Town
Game Boy Color by the Numbers

Color graphics!
More speed! Bigger games!
Wireless Data Transfer!

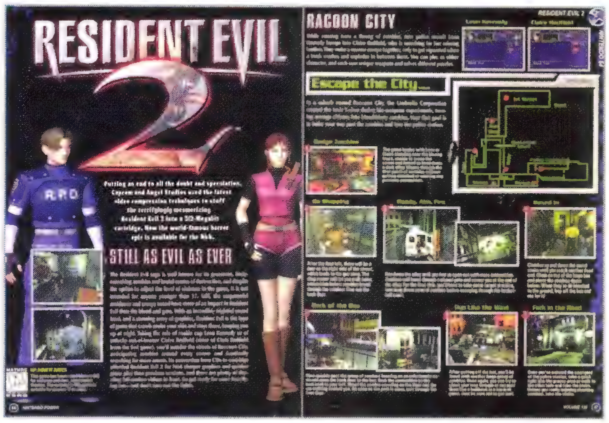
Game Boy Color Has All this and more.

Pokémon Snap
Gotta Print 'em Out
Turn Your Masterpieces into Stickers
The Sticker Machine Accepts All Major Pokémon Credit Cards
Sticker at Actual Size
A Personalized Pokemon Photo Safari
Put Your Best Shots in the Gallery
Funniest Scene
Crankiest Pokémon

The shores of Pokémon Island are about to open and allow visitors! Prepare for an experience like no other as you travel through a three-dimensional Pokémon playground, snapping souvenirs along the way.

Donkey Kong 64
Diddy's Funkiness Mine Ride

Mario Party
Welcome to Mushroom Village


Resident Evil 2
Racoon City
Escape the City
Still as Evil as Ever

Pokémon
PokéCenter
All Pokémon, All the Time!
They're Coming...
Pokémon on Tour
PokéChat
Flying-Type Pokémon
Pokémon Gallery

1999

Nintendo Power opened 1999 with an article in which Mario and Wario made predictions for the upcoming year, including Mario's belief that The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time would be the "Game of the Century." Wario insisted that the title would go to a golf game called Ganondorf on Golf starring himself and Link's archnemesis. Equally amusing was a "Beware the Y2K Bug" article in the April issue that assured paranoid gamers they could rest easy—the Nintendo 64 *was* Y2K compliant.

It's a good thing that the N64 didn't short out at the turn of the century; as the year's coverage proved, there were still plenty of great games for the system. This year marked the beginning of the long-running Mario Party and Super Smash Bros. series. Fan favorites like Pokémon Snap, Goemon's Great Adventure, and WWF WrestleMania 2000 were introduced in 1999, as well. Donkey Kong 64 brought the big ape back into the spotlight, and we marveled at Capcom's ability to cram Resident Evil 2 onto an N64 cartridge. Broadening the N64's audience was a pair of popular PC titles that were headed to the console; both Command & Conquer and StarCraft 64 were shown off in the magazine.

Pokémon Snap wasn't the only big Pokémon news of the year. In fact, the franchise had grown so popular by this point that the April issue marked the debut of PokéCenter, a monthly feature that explored all aspects of the series, including the games, anime, and merchandise. There were even Pokémon giveaway contests in which lucky readers could win exclusive Pokémon such as Surfing Pikachu and Mew.

Some of the more amusing tidbits from 1999 include an ad for a Tommy Hilfiger-branded Game Boy Color, an article about the upcoming N64 game Perfect Dark that showed off the game's ability to import your own face via the Game Boy Camera (a feature that would ultimately be removed), and the very first ad from longtime Nintendo Power advertiser Songbird Ocarina. The December issue also contained the debut of the oddly titled handheld section Game Boy A-Go-Go. Far out.

TOMMY HILFIGER
Just add color!
Yours for $57.50

[Below] Gamers always wondered what would happen if Mario fought Link. Super Smash Bros. let them find out!

They've raced go-karts. They've partied hearty. Now, Nintendo's famous cast of characters is taking its competitive spirit someplace it's never been before: the ring.
SUPER SMASH BROS.
TOO CUTE FOR COMFORT
SMASHED-UP MODES
ONE-PLAYER
TWO- TO FOUR-PLAYER VS. MODES
TIME
STOCK
BONUS STAGES

POWER NP ONline

Welcome to the new face of Nintendo Power online. With the introduction of the NP icon last month, Nintendo Power made the connection to Internet gaming information even better and faster for readers of Nintendo Power magazine. Here's a taste of what's to come.

The Power Connection

Thrash

News & Events

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER

TEAR IT UP!

IT'S COMING...THE FIRST N64 SKATING GAME IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER, AND LET US BE THE FIRST TO TELL YOU IT'S ALL GOOD. PREPARE TO RELEASE THE DERANGED SKATE RAT WITHIN.

PAPER MARIO

Gamers everywhere rejoice as Mario—the most popular character in video game history—returns in Paper Mario, a brand-new adventure for your N64. Read on for exclusive information, screen shots and more!

Who's Who

What's Going On

2000

The dawn of the new millennium was a grand year for Nintendo Power readers. There was certainly a wealth of popular titles to read about—the N64 saw classics such as Tony Hawk's Pro Skater, Perfect Dark, Kirby 64: The Crystal Shards, Mega Man 64, Mario Tennis, and The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask. It wasn't released until February of the following year, but Paper Mario also made a huge splash in Nintendo Power during 2000. Before E3 finally cleared up the game's official title, it had previously been referred to as Super Mario RPG 2, Super Mario Adventure, and Paper Mario Story in the magazine's pages, and it was on the Player's Most Wanted list in the Power Charts section for nearly the entire year (alongside Dolphin, the code-name for Nintendo's next home console). Nintendo Power also gained a Power Online section this year, meant to inform readers of various websites and online promotions Nintendo created for upcoming and popular titles.

After going strong for two years in North America, the Pokémon craze was at a great height in 2000. In that year alone, we covered six Pokémon game releases: Pokémon Gold and Silver Versions; Pokémon Stadium; Pokémon Trading Card Game (for Game Boy Color); Pokémon Puzzle League; and Hey You, Pikachu! (as well as a Pikachu-themed N64 console) were all released in close succession in 2000. And as if it weren't already a wonderful time to be a Pokémon fan, the November and December issues of Nintendo Power featured a special Pokémon manga based on the popular *Pokémon* TV series.

But the best was yet to come. After much anticipation, Nintendo revealed Project Dolphin to be the GameCube (which appeared alongside a stunning new Legend of Zelda demo), and the Game Boy Advance had its coming-out party at the Nintendo Space World show in Japan, setting the stage for a thrilling 2001.

Pokémon

GOLD VERSION & SILVER VERSION

CATCH 'EM BOTH

ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE DARK? New Cure!

THE TOP SECRET

IS THE DECK STACKED Against YOU?

GOOMBA GAZETTE

MARIO PARTIES YOU WEREN'T INVITED TO!

KIRBY'S PUFFY PINK PEARLS OF WISDOM

TWO PLUMBERS PLUMBING

LOCH NESS MONSTER REVEALED!

Ape Goes Bananas—The TV Interview You'll Never See

DONKEY KONG SPEAKS

KAZOOIE'S RUMOROONIES

I WANT IT THAT WAY!

RECIPE FOR HEALING

LINK'S AWAKENING

Quiz-Show Quarrel

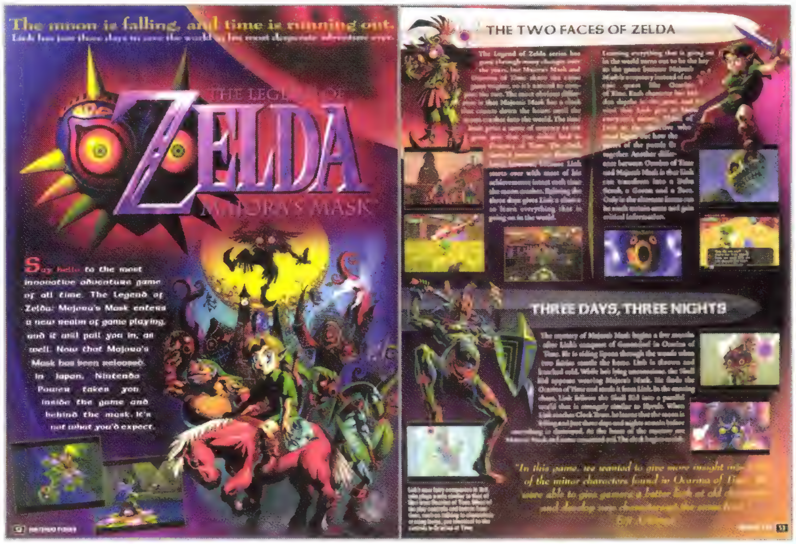
[Left] This wacky Nintendo-themed tabloid was included in the April 2000 issue of NP as an April Fool's Day gag. [Below] Majora's Mask is weird, but it sure is awesome.

SPACE WORLD

NINTENDO GAMECUBE!

IT'S MIGHTY SMALL!

THE FUTURE IS CUBED



The moon is falling, and time is running out. Link has just three days to save the world in his most desperate adventure ever.

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA MAJORA'S MASK

Say hello to the most innovative adventure game of all time. The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask enters a new realm of game playing, and it will pull you in, as well. Now that Majora's Mask has been released in Japan, Nintendo Power takes you inside the game and behind the mask. It's not what you'd expect.

THE TWO FACES OF ZELDA

THREE DAYS, THREE NIGHTS

STRATEGIES, MAPS AND MORE

NINTENDO POWER ADVANCE

PREMIERE ISSUE!

IN-DEPTH STRATEGY IN THIS ISSUE

SUPER MARIO ADVANCE

F-ZERO MAXIMUM VELOCITY

RAYMAN ADVANCE

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 2

CASTLEVANIA: CIRCLE OF THE MOON

OH, BROTHER! GHOSTS, GHOULS AND ROOMS FULL OF BOOS KEEP LUIGI SPOOKED IN HIS STARRING DEBUT—A SPECIAL EFFECTS SHOWCASE FOR NINTENDO GAMECUBE!

Luigi's Mansion

FRIGHTENING FUN!

SPOTLIGHT ON LUIGI

A PRIZE WITH SURPRISES

2001 Excitement for the Game Boy Advance and GameCube continued to rise, culminating with their releases in June and November, respectively, and firmly concluding the Nintendo 64 and Game Boy Color eras. Nintendo Power's content for the year reflected this transition, detailing the must-have titles for the outgoing hardware generation—Paper Mario, Mario Party 3, and Pokémon Stadium for N64, and Pokémon Crystal Version and The Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Seasons and Oracle of Ages for Game Boy Color—while simultaneously providing in-depth looks at Nintendo's next generation of systems. Coinciding with the change, Nintendo Power's logo evolved in the April issue. The traditional yellow-and-red color scheme was traded for a black-and-white, more-modern font.

The Game Boy Advance launch resulted in plenty of great game coverage, including articles on Super Mario Advance, Mario Kart: Super Circuit, Wario Land 4, and Castlevania: Circle of the Moon, as well as Advance Wars and Golden Sun—two titles that would begin successful franchises of their own. In July, Nintendo Power launched its own quarterly spin-off—Nintendo Power Advance—devoted exclusively to in-depth coverage of the handheld. Subscribers received the first issue as a complimentary gift, and three more issues were produced (the final being a guide for Super Mario Advance 2: Super Mario World) before it ceased publication the following year.

November 2001 was a momentous month for Nintendo Power. Not only did the issue celebrate the long-anticipated release of our favorite purple cube with a Luigi's Mansion cover story, but it marked the 150th issue of the magazine. Unsurprisingly, we celebrated the sesquicentennial milestone with tons of retro-y goodness. The following issue, however, was arguably an even bigger affair—it contained a Super Smash Bros. Melee cover story and a feature article on Pikmin.

[Right] Role-playing game Golden Sun was one of the best original titles to hit the Game Boy Advance.

NINTENDO GAMECUBE REVEALED

NINTENDO KEPT THE LID ON ITS INCREDIBLE LINEUP OF NINTENDO GAMECUBE GAMES UNTIL E3, BUT NOW THAT E3 HAS COME AND GONE, NINTENDO POWER IS BRINGING YOU A GLIMPSE OF THE FIRST WAVE OF NINTENDO GAMECUBE SOFTWARE. PREPARE TO BE AMAZED!

STRAIGHT FROM THE SOURCE

Golden Sun

The Golden Sun Also Rises

Water

TAKE A SMASH COURSE IN THE SUPER ONE-PLAYER MODES OF THE HIGHLY ANTICIPATED FIGHTER.

SUPER SMASH BROS. Melee

A HERO FOR ALL SEASONS

GAME WATCH

THIS MONTH

NINTENDO ADVANCES NEWS OF LAUNCH TITLES

GAME BOY ADVANCE EXCLUSIVE GALLERY

BRING HOME A BLOCKBUSTER!

THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
THE MAZE RUNNER
JAMES DASHNER
JOHN STEPHENS
BOOK ONE ◇ The Books of Beginning
THE EMERALD ATLAS
Michael Scott
THE ALCHEMYST
The Secrets of THE IMMORTAL NICHOLAS FLAMEL
N. D. WILSON
THE DRAGON'S TOOTH
ASHTOWN BURIALS I
Christopher Paolini
INHERITANCE
THE #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO CATCH A KILLER?
niall leonard
CRUSHER

Discover the stories that will have you hanging on to the edge of your seat this holiday season!

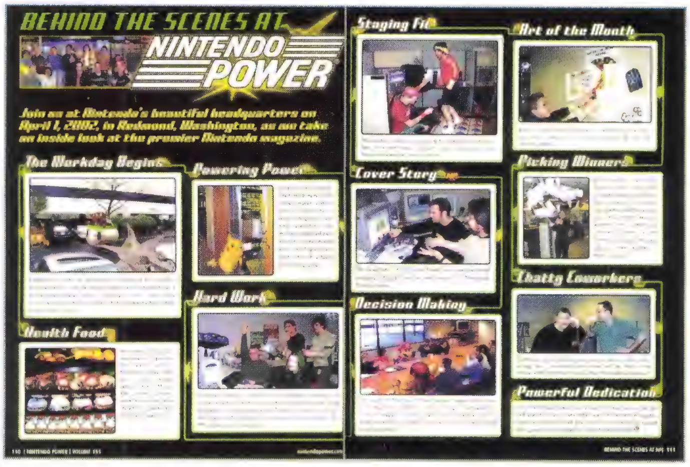
RHCB

Illustration © 2009 by Philip Straub

Read & Discuss—RandomBuzzers.com

THIS ISSUE, NINTENDO POWER GOES BACK TO COLLEGE TO DISCOVER WHAT GOES ON WITHIN THE WALLS OF NORTH AMERICA'S PREMIER VIDEO GAME PROGRAMMING INSTITUTE.

DIGIPEN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY


BEHIND THE SCENES AT NINTENDO POWER

Join us at Nintendo's beautiful headquarters on April 1, 2002, in Redmond, Washington, as we take an inside look at the premier Nintendo magazine.

The Workday Begins
Powering Power
Health Food
Hard Work
Staging Fit
Cover Story
Decision Making
Art of the Month
Picking Winners
Chatty Coworkers
Powerful Dedication

The WaveBird wireless Controller allows you to move freely and maneuver as you play games, without the risk of pulling the cord. You can execute Super Smash Bros. Melee combos or pluck Pikmin, without interference, from up to 20 feet away.

THE WAVEBIRD TAKES FLIGHT

TUNE IN, TURN ON
CORD-FREE CONTROL
WIN A WAVEBIRD

SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE

ZELDA
Four Swords

2002

There was a lot to report in 2002 in regards to Nintendo's leadership. Throughout the year, Nintendo Power provided details about the retirement of Minoru Arakawa, the founder and original president of Nintendo of America; he was soon replaced by current president Tatsumi Kimishima. Likewise, the July issue reported the news that Hiroshi Yamauchi, the man who served as Nintendo's worldwide president for 53 years, was stepping down from his position.

These corporate shakeups didn't stop the influx of new games, though—both the GameCube and Game Boy Advance continued to thrive. Nintendo Power featured large articles on such big titles as The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker (which generated considerable controversy for its daring new artistic style), Metroid Prime, Super Mario Sunshine, Mega Man Zero, and Metroid Fusion. New peripherals like the GameCube WaveBird wireless controller and the Game Boy Advance e-Reader received extended coverage, as well.

In an effort to get readers more involved in the game-making process, Nintendo teamed up with the DigiPen Institute of Technology to debut Project FUN, an online game-creation tool. Starting with the July issue, monthly columns would give potential game designers tips and advice on how to take advantage of DigiPen's software.

Role-playing fans had a good reason to celebrate in 2002, as the first issue of the year saw the return of Epic Center (which quietly faded away around 1997). Throughout the year, the section discussed such games as Final Fantasy Tactics Advance and Lunar Legend. In November, another regular column debuted: The Crossing Guardian was a monthly look at Animal Crossing for GameCube. Since events happen in real time in the world of Animal Crossing, the column provided readers with a peek at some of the activities that would be unfolding in the coming month.

EPIC CENTER

We at Epic Center are nothing if not eager to please. You sent e-mail after e-mail asking for assistance in clearing the final stage of Advance Wars' Campaign Mode, and we're more than happy to deliver. We'll give you everything you need to defeat Sturm in The Final Battle—plus a damage chart that will be a big help for any conflict. Also check out the Epic News section, which contains a sneak peek at the game that's been making for some very late nights at the office: Tactics Ogre: The Knight of Lodis!

EPIC NEWS

Knight Falls on Game Boy Advance

RPGs Evolved

EPIC TACTICS

You've fought and scrapped your way to The Final Battle, but Sturm keeps crushing your gallant troops. Don't raise the white flag! Look below to see how to determine Final Battle allies, then check the following pages for maps and detailed strategy.

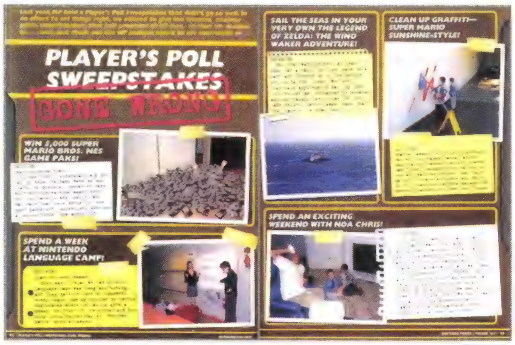
ADVANCE WARS

THE CAMPAIGN TREE

ANDY
1. IT'S WAR
2. GUNFIGHTER
3. AIR ACE!
ANDY
4. MAX STRIKES!
5. MAX'S FOLLY?
6. OLAF'S NAVY
7. OLAF'S SEA STRIKE
MAX
4. MAX STRIKES!
5. SNIPER!
6. BLIZZARD BATTLE
7. HISTORY LESSON
8. SAMI'S DEBUT
9. KANBEI ARRIVES
10. MIGHTY KANBEI
11. KANBEI'S ERROR?

DEEP IMPACT

Animal Crossing
welcome to your new life


PLAYER'S POLL SWEEPSTAKES
GONE WRONG
WIN 5,000 SUPER MARIO BROS. NES GAME PAKS!
SPEND A WEEK AT NINTENDO LANGUAGE CAMP!
SAIL THE SEAS IN YOUR VERY OWN THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER ADVENTURE!
CLEAN UP GRAFFITI—SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE-STYLE!
SPEND AN EXCITING WEEKEND WITH NOA CHRIS!

SOUL CALIBUR II

nintendo-connects

2003

If you weren't already a Nintendo Power subscriber, 2003 provided a couple of great incentives. With the January issue subscribers received a bonus pack-in CD titled *Smashing Live!*, which featured excellent orchestral versions of the music from Super Smash Bros. Melee. (The issue included an Animal Crossing calendar poster, too.) Toward the end of the year, fans had the opportunity to snag a limited-edition The Legend of Zelda: Collector's Edition disc for GameCube—which included ports of the original Legend of Zelda, Zelda II, Ocarina of Time, and Majora's Mask—if they renewed or purchased a subscription to Nintendo Power.

Both the GameCube and Game Boy Advance continued to build steam throughout 2003 with strong software lineups. For Game Boy Advance, these included Pokémon Ruby and Sapphire Versions; Golden Sun: The Lost Age; Castlevania: Aria of Sorrow; WarioWare, Inc.: Mega Microgame$!; Final Fantasy Tactics Advance; and Fire Emblem. GameCube owners would read about titles such as The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker (as well as its pre-order bonus, which included The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time Master Quest), Soul Calibur II, F-Zero GX, Billy Hatcher and the Giant Egg, Viewtiful Joe, and Kirby Air Ride, which was complemented by a special Kirby Air Ride comic featured in the November and December issues. And although the GBA e-Reader was released in 2002, Nintendo Power continued to promote the peripheral through the end of 2003 with three specials, as well as an EON Ticket e-Reader card, which allowed Pokémon players to travel to a special island once they had defeated the Elite Four.

Other noteworthy features in 2003 included a three-part Metroid Prime comic, spotlights on game companies such as Capcom and Ubisoft, and the continuation of Project FUN.

Wario ware, inc.
MEGA MICROGAMES!
Wario's Got Game
Corner Chaos

FIRE EMBLEM
A Long and Fiery Tradition

[Left] Long denied to North American players, the excellent Fire Emblem strategy-RPG series finally crossed the Pacific in 2003 and landed on Game Boy Advance.

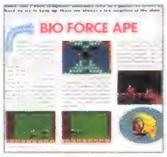
Viewtiful Joe

ZELDA
Wind Waker
A Link for the Future

LAND OF THE LOST

Nintendo Power covers lots of games—unfortunately, some of them don't make it to release. Here are a few titles that never saw the light of day.

EARTHBOUND
EarthBound originally was supposed to be an NES game (the North American version of Mother in Japan). Mother's Super Famicom sequel is what finally made it stateside as EarthBound for Super NES.


BIO FORCE APE

BIO FORCE APE
A game about a genetically enhanced ape capable of using wrestling moves? How did this *not* get released!?

KUNG FU II
This sequel to the NES original came out in Japan as Spartan X 2, but never made it to these shores.

TIME DIVER EON MAN
Unlike most canceled games covered by NP, this one received a big strategy feature before it got the axe.

STAR FOX II
Star Fox II is one of the most notorious canceled games. Many of its concepts ended up in Star Fox 64.

DRAGON HOPPER
When the Virtual Boy underperformed, many games got scrapped, including top-down adventure-platformer Dragon Hopper.

EARTHBOUND 64

EARTHBOUND 64
The EarthBound series seems jinxed. EarthBound 64 was planned for the 64DD; both the game and the peripheral were canceled in the US.

METROID ZERO MISSION

Nintendo goes back to the distant future to explore the full story of bounty hunter Samus Aran's battle against the Mother Brain and the Space Pirates of Zebes on the GBA.

SPACE ODDITIES

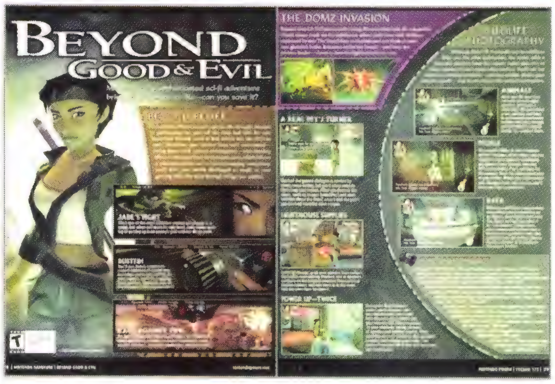
ARAN'S ORIGINS

DANGEROUS DEEP

Pokémon FIRERED VERSION LEAFGREEN VERSION

Pokémon Basics

Return to Kanto


BEYOND GOOD & EVIL

THE DOMZ INVASION

CELEBRATE 15 YEARS of MEGA MAN MANIA

CAPCOM

SOMETIMES YOU NEED A SNAKE TO CATCH A RAT

METAL GEAR SOLID THE TWIN SNAKES

GET ON THE READY LINE

BRAND NEW FEATURES SAME GREAT ACTION

Beyond Good & Evil [above] and Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes [left] are two of the best third-party titles on GameCube.

2004 Coming off of a stellar 2003 holiday season, the January issue of Nintendo Power focused on many of the previous year's big-name titles such as Mario Kart: Double Dash!!, Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga, Fire Emblem, Beyond Good & Evil, 1080° Avalanche, Kirby Air Ride, and Mario Party 5. 2004 continued with even more hot games, including Pokémon FireRed and LeafGreen Versions, Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles, Metroid Prime 2: Echoes, Paper Mario: The Thousand-Year Door, The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures, Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes, Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories, Metroid: Zero Mission, and Astro Boy: Omega Factor. And who could forget the emotional unveiling of The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess at Nintendo's 2004 E3 press conference?

Even retro gaming got some love in 2004. Nintendo Power dedicated several pages to the NES Classics collection for the Game Boy Advance, which saw the rerelease of such hits as Super Mario Bros., The Legend of Zelda, Donkey Kong, and Castlevania. The popular NES game River City Ransom received an upgrade for GBA, but sadly, Capcom's Mega Man Mania, a compilation of the five Game Boy Mega Man titles, was never released (even though it was advertised in the April issue). Perhaps the biggest news of the year was the announcement of Nintendo's latest handheld system, the Nintendo DS. Nintendo Power revealed the system in the July issue, and it landed on shelves in November.

A few swell bonus goodies were provided with issues of the magazine in 2004. You could celebrate the election year with some "Mario for President" stickers, decorate your abode with reusable Pikmin 2-themed static clings, enjoy Metal Gear Solid and Custom Robo comics, and swipe a GBA e-Reader card that contained a Kirby slide puzzle.

CLASSIC NES SERIES

Everything old is fun again! Eight of the greats return for retro gaming on the GBA. Experience the classics that started the Nintendo age.

GAME WATCH

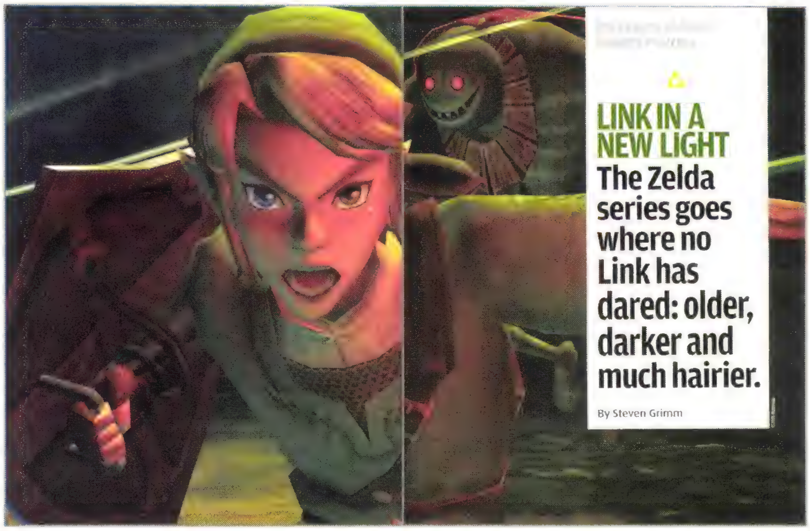
THE INSIDE SOURCE FOR NINTENDO NEWS & PREVIEWS

NINTENDO DS—THE NEW LOOK

NINTENDO DS

A TRUE BEAUTY—INSIDE AND OUT

DEVELOPERS OUT IN FULL FORCE



LINK IN A NEW LIGHT

The Zelda series goes where no Link has dared: older, darker and much hairier.

By Steven Grimm

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

The Minish Cap

Link Is Back and Smaller Than Ever in an All-New GBA Adventure.

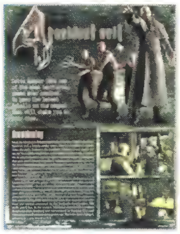
News

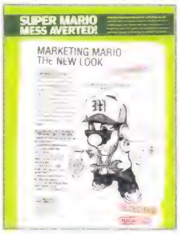
Iwata Brings It

Bounty Call? Samus Has Your Back

2005

2005 wasn't just a big year for Nintendo Power—it was absolutely huge. In Vol. 193 the magazine received its most significant redesign ever, resulting in a cleaner look with big, bold art and screenshots, and a vastly improved structure that allowed for a strong emphasis on cutting-edge news and previews, and made room for expanded, more-informative reviews. New departments—such as the fan-driven Community section—were added, while old standbys such as Classified Information and Pulse (renamed from Player's Pulse in late 2004) were modernized. The magazine's logo was redone, as well. Partially as a response to the abundance of similar info available on the Internet, NP de-emphasized its strategy coverage somewhat, while injecting even more variety and humor into its feature articles. In 2005 readers could see the NP crew acting out microgames from WarioWare: Touched!, bear witness to a fake "rejected" Mario redesign, check out an NP production assistant donning a Mario costume to prepare for Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix, and more. In addition, a regular Inside Zelda section was added, providing monthly insights from various members of the Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess development team. Of course, there was no lack of other great games to talk about—the Nintendo DS came into its own with titles such as Mario Kart DS, Nintendogs, Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time, Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney, Trauma Center: Under the Knife, Trace Memory, and Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow. Meanwhile, Resident Evil 4, Star Fox Assault, Donkey Konga, Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance, The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap, and Pokémon Emerald Version kept things interesting on GameCube and Game Boy Advance. On top of everything else, this was the year that Nintendo unveiled the Wii Remote controller—back when the system was still codenamed Revolution—setting the stage for breakout success.





SUPER MARIO MESS AVERTED!

MARKETING MARIO
THE NEW LOOK

News

Taking Control

[Right] Inside Zelda provided unique access to NP readers.

INSIDE ZELDA

THE VISION GUY

GROWING WITH NINTENDO

FROM PIXELS TO PRODUCER

THE WHOLE PRODUCTION

COMMUNITY

Find Your Inner Link

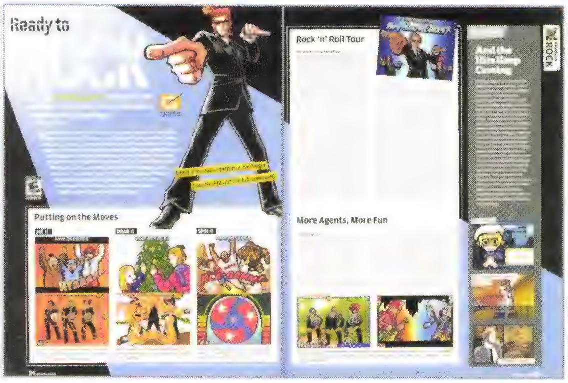
Real-Life Reenactments

We put WarioWare: Touched! to the ultimate test: are the games as fun in real life as they are on the Nintendo DS?

WarioWare Touched!

THE GOOD LIFE

Days on the farm are anything but ordinary in Harvest Moon: Magical Melody for Nintendo GameCube.


Ready to Rock

Putting on the Moves

Rock 'n' Roll Tour

More Agents, More Fun

PLAY

EARTHWORM JIM

[Left] Somehow Nintendo Power writers Chris Shepperd and Andy Myers agreed to appear in this illustration inspired by Grant Wood's American Gothic for their feature on Harvest Moon: Magical Melody.

Right out of the box Unpack and Play

Wii Sports

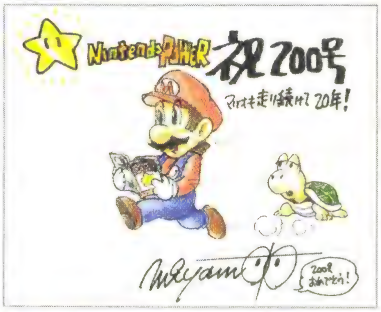
Wii Console

Nunchuk

Wii Remote

Also Included

Sensor Bar


Nintendo POWER 祝200号
マリオも走り続けて20年!
Miyamoto
2006 おめでとう!

A Hero in Motion

2006

2006 began with plenty of excitement—February marked the release of NP's 200th issue, after all! To celebrate, Vol. 200 featured a special congratulatory drawing from none other than Shigeru Miyamoto himself, plus a poster of Nintendo's biggest stars drawn by comic-book artist J. Scott Campbell. The issue also contained a set of retro-tastic stickers and the conclusion of NP's list of the top 200 games ever made; this time, the winning spot went to The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, followed by Resident Evil 4, The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past, The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker, and Super Mario 64. New sections appeared in the magazine, too: the short-lived Point/Counterpoint, in which two editors debated a hot gaming topic, debuted in Vol. 200, and Playback, which spotlighted a classic game, first appeared in Vol. 201 with a look at Earthworm Jim.

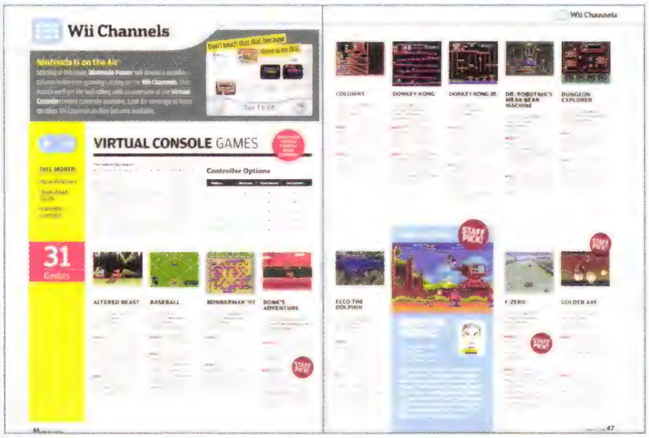
Games such as the trendsetting Brain Age and New Super Mario Bros.—Mario's first 2D side-scroller in more than a decade—grabbed big headlines early in the year, but the latter half was dominated by news of the Wii console. Leading up to the system's release, NP provided tons of info about the innovative new hardware, its controller, its built-in software features (Virtual Console, for example), and numerous launch games, including The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess, Wii Sports, Red Steel, Excite Truck, and Rayman Raving Rabbids. The DS wasn't ignored, either; Final Fantasy III and Elite Beat Agents were favorites among the NP staff.

Wii

NP TOP 200

The Countdown Concludes with the Final 40

The Bros. Are Back



Wii Channels

Nintendo Is on the Air

VIRTUAL CONSOLE GAMES

31 Games

DREAMS COME TRUE

The wait is finally over! Sega's beloved purple jester returns for a Wii-exclusive sequel: NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams.

2007 With the world still rejoicing over the release of the Wii console late the previous year, early 2007 issues were filled with launch-window goodness, including continuing coverage of The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess. (The issues were also filled with "lifestyle photography," which quickly became the bane of the NP staff's existence.) As the year went on, the magazine introduced new regular sections such as the download-based Wii Channels in Vol. 212 and developer-interview section Power Profiles in Vol. 216, which kicked off with the legendary Shigeru Miyamoto. The magazine also continued to take advantage of its new focus and design by delivering fun features such as the first look at Sega's long-anticipated sequel NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams, the exclusive reveal of Contra 4 for DS, a guide to making the most convincing Mii characters, a tongue-in-cheek article about how to use Wii to turn nongamers into gamers, and a cooking-game-based piece about culinary arts gone awry. But the tips and strategies the magazine was known for remained—in fact, Classified Information returned to cover Virtual Console games, complete with manila-envelope design! Major games such as Super Smash Bros. Brawl, Super Mario Galaxy, Pokémon Diamond and Pearl Versions, Super Paper Mario, Professor Layton and the Curious Village, and Metroid Prime 3: Corruption (which earned the first-ever perfect 10 on the current review scale) received plenty of coverage in NP's pages, but behind the scenes, the big story was that Nintendo Power, after 19 years, would no longer be published by Nintendo itself. Starting with Vol. 222, publishing duties were handed over to Future US, Inc., and the printing schedule was bumped up to 13 issues per year.

Wii MARIO & SONIC AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES

NINTENDO POWER

SUPER MARIO GALAXY

ADVANCE WARS: DAYS OF RUIN

BRAWL!

EXCLUSIVE SCREENS OF THE BEST SMASH BROS. EVER

Classified Info

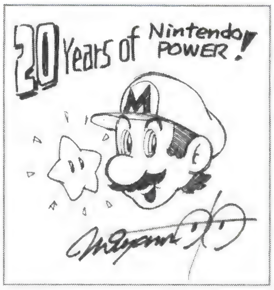
[Above] At long last, the manila envelopes returned to Classified Information, complemented by classic codes.

Now You're Cooking with Power

Reach for the Stars

Power Profiles

Shigeru Miyamoto



[Left] Even Mario creator Shigeru Miyamoto took part in NP's 20th anniversary; he created this congratulatory drawing.

20 YEARS OF POWER

Final Thoughts

We finally get behind the wheel of MARIO KART Wii, the revolutionary new take on Nintendo's beloved series.

ROAD TEST

Beginning at the End

ROCKSTAR'S BLOCKBUSTER FRANCHISE EXPLODES ONTO DS WITH GRAND THEFT AUTO: CHINATOWN WARS.

BIG TROUBLE in LITTLE CHINA

2008

Nintendo Power turned 20 years old in 2008, and boy did we party. Every issue was adorned with a special 20th-anniversary badge and contained a behind-the-scenes 20 Years of Nintendo Power retrospective article. For the anniversary proper, Vol. 231 was jam-packed with celebratory goodness, including exclusive reveals and new details on games such as Mega Man 9, Sonic Unleashed, Castlevania Judgment, and MadWorld, plus we provided a brand-new Nester comic and a sweet 20th-anniversary poster. We also went list-crazy by naming the top 20 games for every Nintendo system! (Well, except the Virtual Boy; it didn't even get 20 games in North America.) To top it off, NP threw a birthday bash at the Nintendo World store in New York City (complete with games, cake, and a costume contest), where we got to hang out with hundreds of our awesome fans. Thanks to everyone who attended!

Despite all the revelry, somehow we found time to keep making magazines, and in the process brought subtle design changes to the Pulse, Wii Channels, and Previews sections while essentially phasing out the strategy and bringing more informative features on titles like Mario Kart Wii, The World Ends with You, Castlevania: Order of Ecclesia, and Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars (which, in Vol. 234, became the first game to receive a special subscriber-edition cover). This year also saw the introduction of a line of premium Nintendo Power newsstand-exclusive specials, such as thorough guides to the Wii and DS systems.

Of course, we'd be remiss in not mentioning Vol. 229, where you'll find a Wii Fit Healthy Living through Gaming feature (in which Steve T. appeared without his pants), and a Next Issue page that claimed there was a clue hidden in an image of the moon. There wasn't *really* a clue, but it made us laugh and laugh and laugh. Our apologies.

IT CAME FROM JAPAN

ゲームショウ

Wii Channels

True Blue

Give The Gift That Will Thrill Everyone!

This holiday season give a gift that brings everyone together... send them world-famous Omaha Steaks.® Aged to perfection, flash-frozen at the peak of flavor and delivered to their door, Omaha Steaks are a gift both family and friends can enjoy together.

OMAHA STEAKS 100% GUARANTEE

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PORK CHOPS

STUFFED SOLE

GOURMET JUMBO FRANKS

BONELESS CHICKEN BREASTS

STUFFED BAKED POTATOES

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4 (4 oz.) **Boneless Pork Chops**
2 (4½ oz.) **Stuffed Sole**
with Scallops & Crabmeat
8 (3 oz.) **Gourmet Jumbo Franks**
4 **Boneless Chicken Breasts** (1 lb. pkg.)
4 **Stuffed Baked Potatoes**

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And FREE Cutting Board to every shipping address

Limit of 2 Packages and 1 Cutlery Set & Cutting Board per address. Standard shipping & handling will be applied per address. Offer expires 12/31/12.

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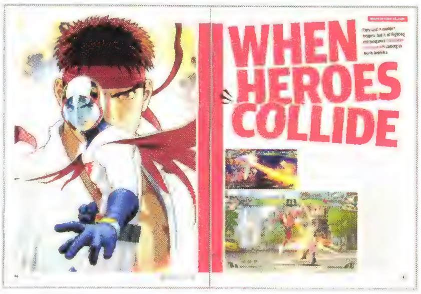
Team Spirit

Your Wish Is Granted

2009

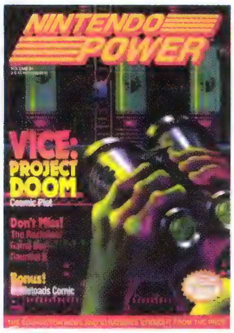
2009 was a curious time for Nintendo systems. Both Wii and DS were going strong, but the industry didn't seem to know what to make of it all. Was the hardware built for casual gamers or hardcore gamers? The answer, of course, was both, but at Nintendo Power we continued to focus on the enthusiast audience that couldn't wait for the latest info on the biggest games and most-recent hardware innovations. First-party titles like New Super Mario Bros. Wii, The Legend of Zelda: Spirit Tracks, Punch-Out!!, Mario & Luigi: Bowser's Inside Story, Wii Sports Resort, and Pokémon Platinum Version were among the year's most resonant releases, but we also made sure that third-party games—including The Conduit, Kingdom Hearts 358/2 Days, Phantasy Star 0, Muramasa: The Demon Blade, Resident Evil: The Darkside Chronicles, the fan-demanded Tatsunoko vs. Capcom: Ultimate All-Stars, and the criminally underappreciated Silent Hill: Shattered Memories—got the attention they deserved.

The year also saw the growth of digitally distributed titles, especially after the launch of the Nintendo DSi system in April. In response, NP's Wii Channels section was creatively renamed Download, and throughout the year we covered a number of significant WiiWare and DSiWare games, such as Shantae: Risky's Revenge, the Tales of Monkey Island series, Contra ReBirth, Castlevania: The Adventure ReBirth, Final Fantasy IV: The After Years, Cave Story, And Yet It Moves, and La-Mulana. The section even celebrated 20 years of the Sega Genesis through the eyes of Virtual Console—who would have imagined *that* could happen back in 1989!?

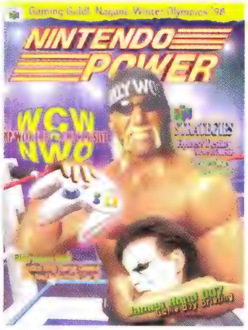

WHEN HEROES COLLIDE

NP'S CRAPPIEST COVERS

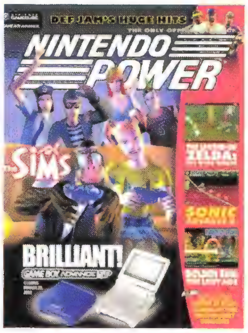
You win some, you lose some. These covers weren't exactly in the winner's circle.


NINTENDO POWER
VICE: PROJECT DOOM

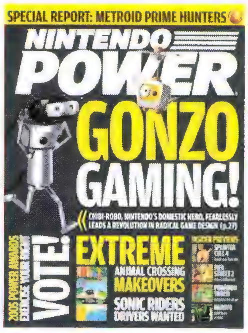
VOL. 24
Giant binoculars? Seriously?


NINTENDO POWER
WCW NWO

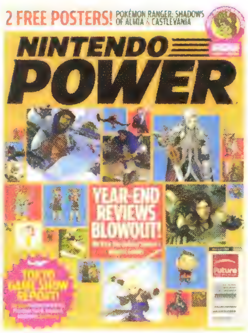
VOL. 105
What kind of freakish polygonal/human hybrid is this?


NINTENDO POWER
SIMS
BRILLIANT!

VOL. 166
These character models are just downright scary.


SPECIAL REPORT: METROID PRIME HUNTERS
NINTENDO POWER
GONZO GAMING!
VOTE!
EXTREME
ANIMAL CROSSING MAKEOVERS
SONIC RIDERS DRIVERS WANTED

VOL. 201
Why did we think an all-text cover was a good idea?


2 FREE POSTERS!
NINTENDO POWER
YEAR-END REVIEWS BLOWOUT!

VOL. 236
This character collage is just an unfocused mess.

CHRIS S.'S GAME: FUNKY BOXING

Pause

[Above] WarioWare D.I.Y. turned Nintendo Power's editors into small-time game designers.

Aaaarrgh!

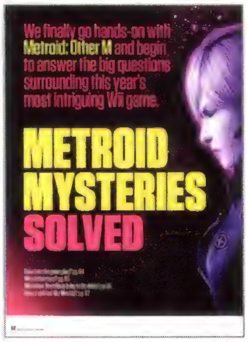
GHOST TRICK: PHANTOM DETECTIVE

You've got better things to do tonight than die!

AWESOME WEAPONS & POWER-UPS

SEVEN TETRIS SHAPES

WELCOME BACK TO THE GALAXY!


We finally go hands-on with Metroid: Other M and begin to answer the big questions surrounding this year's most intriguing Wii game.

METROID MYSTERIES SOLVED

2010

Lots of enormous franchises came out to play in 2010. Between Super Mario Galaxy 2, Metroid: Other M, Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver Versions, Sonic Colors, Donkey Kong Country Returns, Kirby's Epic Yarn, Mega Man 10, and the rerelease of Super Mario All-Stars, it was a great year to be a Nintendo fan. A few other key series made a big splash in NP, as well: Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies finally came to North America and received a special gold-foil wraparound cover for NP Vol. 257, and when WarioWare D.I.Y. hit Nintendo DS, the NP editors created their own microgames to commemorate the occasion in Vol. 253; the games became publicly available that spring.

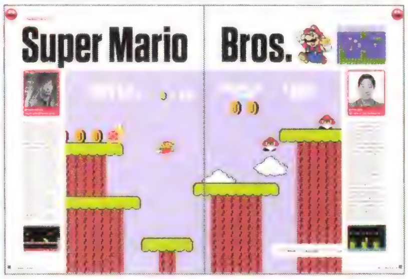
As you can probably tell, the NP staff looks for any excuse for a party, and 2010 gave us a few; in January NP hit the 250-issue mark, and we responded by listing the 250 reasons we love Nintendo—everything from favorite heroes to best game tunes to Mega Man bosses to worst box art. Then at the end of the year, we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the NES by getting the biggest names in the biz to comment on their favorite NES games. Not to toot our own horn, but getting Sonic co-creator Yuji Naka and Metal Gear creator Hideo Kojima to comment on the impact of Super Mario Bros. was pretty awesome.

Other highlights of 2010 were Nintendo's mind-blowing E3 reveal of the Nintendo 3DS handheld and the first hands-on with The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword; meanwhile, the magazine continued to evolve with a redesigned, more flexible previews section and a new Power Up section (formerly News), which added recurring columns such as the Power Quiz, Star Power (a spotlight on a beloved game character), Collector's Corner (featuring gaming toys and goods), and Warp Zone (a look at what was hot 5, 10, and 20 years ago).

STAR POWER Bowser

"My huge cake... Never got a slice..."

"We SHAVE around here, minions!"


Super Mario Bros.

Paper Mario

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

To expand his horizons, kidnapping-wise.

POWER UP

Nintendo's Next Console

The Wii U Experience

[Above] When Wii U debuted at E3 2011, NP was there to play the demos, marvel at the visuals, and point out every little detail of the Wii U GamePad controller.

2011

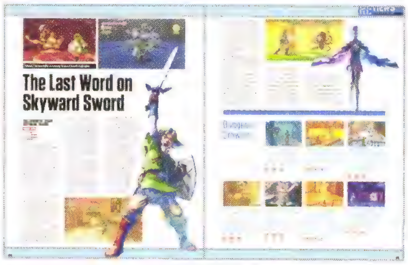
We're not gonna lie—there wasn't a ton of gaming news at the beginning of 2011. (That's one of the reasons NP reverted to a 12-issue-per-year schedule.) There were still exciting games to talk about—Mario Sports Mix, Radiant Historia, and Pokémon Black and White Versions, to name a few—but things were pretty quiet by typical standards. So we did what any sensible gaming publication would do: came up with wacky Nintendo-related features, such as speculating on what characters' new-year's resolutions might be and reflecting on the steamy relationships of our favorite gaming couples. Fortunately, it wasn't long before Nintendo 3DS arrived on the scene, and we endeavored to bring you every juicy detail on the portable powerhouse, including tips to get the most from your system, and coverage of games like Super Street Fighter IV 3D Edition, Metal Gear Solid: Snake Eater 3D, Dead or Alive Dimensions, Resident Evil: Revelations, Star Fox 64 3D, and Sonic Generations. Furthermore, Nintendo announced the Wii U console, which meant the promise of a new era in gaming.

Best of Both Worlds

Do you prefer green eyes or potbellies? Traditional platforming or unbridled speed? With Sonic Generations, you don't have to choose.

Meanwhile, The Legend of Zelda was everywhere you looked in 2011. In addition to publishing a big cover story on The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D, we celebrated the series's 25th birthday in Japan with a series of retro articles, plus we geared up for the holiday launch of The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword—one of the most innovative games in the Zelda series and among the best games yet to grace Wii. Another milestone this year was the 20th anniversary of the Super NES, which we commemorated with a massive feature on our favorite games for that console. (In addition, the Game Boy Advance turned 10 and the Nintendo 64 turned 15.) But soon we were too busy with the latest releases to concern ourselves with the past—Mario Kart 7, Super Mario 3D Land, and Kirby's Return to Dream Land kept us plenty occupied. Our only regret about 2011 is that the long-awaited Mega Man Legends 3 got canceled shortly after we went hands-on with it for an extensive preview article.

Back in Style


The Last Word on Skyward Sword

EXPERT USER'S GUIDE

5

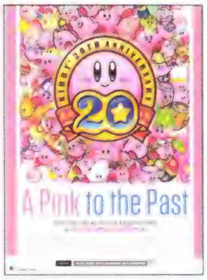
CHOOSE YOUR SET

NINTENDO TVii

MiiVERSE

Wii U PRO CONTROLLER

UPRISE AND SHINE



A Pink to the Past

[Left] Kid Icarus returned at long last!

2012 And here we are: 2012. It's been a long, fun, wild ride for Nintendo Power, but nothing lasts forever. Nonetheless, NP is planning to go out the same way it arrived: with the latest and greatest news about all things Nintendo. Aside from the demise of everybody's favorite gaming publication, 2012 has actually been pretty cool: the Nintendo 3DS XL was released; fan-demanded RPGs Xenoblade Chronicles and The Last Story finally arrived in North America, allowing Wii to go out in style; Pokémon Conquest and Pokémon Black Version 2 and White Version 2 have kept DS owners entertained; and N3DS titles such as New Super Mario Bros. 2, Professor Layton and the Miracle Mask, Rhythm Thief & the Emperor's Treasure, Zero Escape: Virtue's Last Reward, Kingdom Hearts 3D: Dream Drop Distance, Theatrhythm Final Fantasy, and Paper Mario: Sticker Star continue to prove that nobody does portable gaming like Nintendo. And don't forget those NP-exclusive first looks at games like Castlevania: Lords of Shadow—Mirror of Fate and Shantae and the Pirate's Curse! Of course, Wii U fever has been burning all year—something we hope we've been able to alleviate with our features on Rayman Legends, ZombiU, Scribblenauts Unlimited, New Super Mario Bros. U, Nintendo Land, and Assassin's Creed III, as well as Vol. 284's launch guide and this issue's Wii U reviews. We even brought back a bunch of former NP editors and came up with a totally sweet cover! Pretty awesome, right? Thanks for reading, everybody!

STUFF of LEGENDS

Zael

Dagran

Syrenne

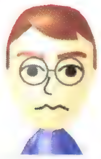
NEW SUPER MARIO BROS. U

What Dreams Are Made Of

POWER PLAYERS

Nintendo Power editors past and present recall their favorite memories of the magazine.

As the good ship Nintendo Power sails into the sunset, we thought it might be fun to provide a few anecdotes from the folks who have kept her running over the years. On the following pages, the current editorial staff, as well as a number of NP alumni, reflect on their time at the magazine—not only sharing their fondest memories, but also taking this final opportunity to come clean and clear their consciences of anything that's been gnawing at them.



Steve Thomason

[illegible]

[illegible]

One of the coolest things about working at the magazine has been the opportunity to interview many of my favorite game developers—the likes of Shigeru Miyamoto, Koji Kondo, Michel Ancel, Yuji Naka, Warren Spector, Eiji Aonuma, Masahiro Sakurai, the Takahashi brothers, and Suda 51 (my all-time favorite interviewee). Listening to so many brilliant creators discuss their craft has only deepened my affection for this fine art form, and almost without exception, these folks have proven as gracious as they are talented.

But my favorite day of the past decade has to be September 13, 2008, when we held a shindig for the magazine's 20th anniversary at the Nintendo World store in New York. That morning, as the NP team strolled to the store from our nearby hotel, we saw hundreds of people lined up around the block. I wondered if there was something else going on nearby; I just couldn't imagine that kind of turnout for our little magazine. But everyone really was there to celebrate with us, and that's when it hit home that people actually read this thing we work so hard on each month. Spending the day with some of them was a wonderful and humbling experience that I will never forget.

On the other hand, I wish I *could* forget giving an 8.0 to Shadow the Hedgehog in our review. I was young, stupid, and had an inexplicable weakness for any game starring hedgehogs. I apologize profusely to anyone who bought that abomination on account of my misguided praise. Also to anyone who was traumatized by my appearance sans pants in Vol. 229.

Chris Hoffman

[illegible]

[illegible]

I have a lot of pleasant memories of Nintendo Power, both as a fan and as an editor. When I was a kid I read every issue from cover to cover; to this day, I still call extra lives "up-ones" due to the Howard & Nester comic from Vol. 6. One of my favorite experiences working on the magazine was in late 2006, leading up to the Wii launch. For weeks, I was in the office until the wee hours of the morning coauthoring the strategy guide for the fantastic Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess and simultaneously working on a Twilight Princess interview and a multipage feature on Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Justice for All. Somehow in the middle of this I had a chance to challenge WWE wrestler Rey Mysterio to a game of Wii Sports Boxing! (I blame my loss on the fact that I wasn't wearing my glasses and because, um, I think he bribed the referee.) That time was exhausting, but it was a lot of fun.

However, my fondest memory of working on Nintendo Power might be visiting the Nintendo World store in New York City for our 20th-anniversary event in 2008. Seeing the enthusiasm of our dedicated fans up close and personal like that really put into perspective how fortunate I've been to be a part of Nintendo Power, and it made all the long hours and occasional stress even more worthwhile. A heartfelt thanks to everybody who showed up!

Things I'm sorry for? Well...I'd like to apologize for the time I attacked my coworker Pete with a steel chair for an article on WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2008 in Vol. 219. Um...no, not really. Actually, I'd like to apologize for putting a photo of a naked mole rat in Vol. 200. Ha! Just joking. Instead, I apologize for when I launched Chris Slate into outer space. Nah, that was fine, too. Who am I kidding? I regret nothing!

Justin Cheng

[illegible]

[illegible]

My childhood wish to work at Nintendo Power came true when I joined the staff back in 2007. We've had a lot of great issues, but one of my favorites is Vol. 250, in which we listed 250 reasons to love Nintendo.

AWESOMELY LAME BOX ART

We put a lot of hours into that feature, but I think the result was well worth it.

I'm also proud of how the Community section evolved over the years. When I first started managing that section, it was a couple of pages long and consisted of a handful of stories. By the end, however, it became one of the most interesting parts of the magazine (in my admittedly biased opinion, anyway).

But what blew me away most during my time at the magazine was the event at the Nintendo World store in New York celebrating 20 years of Nintendo Power. It was amazing to get that face-to-face interaction with our awesome readers.

As for regrets...well, I'm ashamed to say that my only cover story—for Vol. 225, wherein I wrote about a bunch of music games—made for one of the worst covers in the magazine's history. I also wish I hadn't pushed so hard for that Indiana Jones and the Staff of Kings cover (Vol. 239). I think the lesson here is that I should stay away from covers.

Phil Theobald

(2008-2012)
Assistant Editor

Nintendo Power debuted when I was in 8th grade (I'm old), and I was obsessed. I memorized every map, secret, and piece of artwork. I especially loved the early Howard & Nester comics as well as the Super Mario Adventures series and the Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past manga that the magazine ran (back before we Americans knew what manga was). In my junior-high mind, working at Nintendo Power had to be about the coolest job in the world. Turns out I was right.

I considered myself extremely lucky when I began doing freelance writing for Nintendo Power in 2008, and more so when I was brought on as a "real" writer in 2011. I've loved every moment. The team is one of the best that I've worked with, and each month we had a blast making sure each issue was as great as it could be.

But I suppose I should apologize to Hoff for convincing our readers that he's a Brony. When I drew a picture of Rainbow Dash planting a kiss on his cheek in my Colors! 3D review, it was meant as a cheap gag. Once the issue hit the stands, however, word quickly spread about how Hoff must be a big fan of My Little Pony. He's not really a Brony, folks (as far as we know).

Candace Cunningham

(2002-2012)
Copy Editor

My first job out of college was at a strategy-guide publisher that competed with Nintendo. For any big Nintendo game release, our edict was simple: craft a book that would outshine and outsell Nintendo's Official Player's Guide. That was a tall order. Three years later, I found out why when I accepted a job at Nintendo Power. The staff was unprecedentedly game-obsessed, and, as a bonus, snarky (so much that each day for a stretch we awarded one staff member the coveted "sass helmet"). My favorite times among 10 years of exceptional ones were strategy-guide crunch periods. Working through the night in an office complex where all but NP's department was dark, receiving manuscript from loopy writers churning out text as quickly as their fingers could fly, and handing back the edited versions so we could check off one more batch of pages from our to-do list bred a camaraderie that is uncommon among coworkers.

I have only two regrets as NP's time comes to an end: that we weren't able to transition the magazine to an electronic format (which might have allowed it to carry on), and that I never convinced Steve Thomason to stray from his "fried rice and a Coke, and may I please have a fork?" script when ordering lunch at Asian restaurants.

Alan Averill

(2000-2005)
Former Senior Writer

I have a lot of good memories from working at Nintendo Power. Just being able to write for the magazine I read as a kid was pretty great. It was also my first professional writing job, which I'd been striving toward my entire life. And I was young and dumb and not married, so the 80-hour work weeks didn't seem too bad.

In terms of the accomplishments that make me proudest, I have to call a tie. The first is resurrecting Epic Center—which took almost two years of harassing my managing editor. We ended up promoting some obscure and really awesome titles. (I think we were the only magazine to give Car Battler Joe any love. That is such a criminally overlooked game.)

NINTENDO GAMECUBE
GAME BOY ADVANCE
DS
ONLY OFFICIAL SOURCE
NINTENDO POWER
RESIDENT EVIL 4
CASTLEVANIA
WORLD EXCLUSIVE
killer7
INTRIGUE, PARANOIA AND A WHOLE LOT OF GUNS

The second is the final article I wrote for NP—a lengthy cover story on Killer 7. At the time, Nintendo Power was struggling with what kind of magazine it was going to be, and giving a cover to an M-rated game was a source of much debate. Killer 7 is kind of a mess, but it's one of the most ambitious titles I've ever played from a story perspective, and at the time the game was a huge mystery—no one even knew what it was, much less what it was about—so securing an exclusive first look was pretty special.

And my most shameful moment? Well, I once said that Aidyn Chronicles wasn't all that bad, a statement for which I should be flogged in the street. I also said that I couldn't decide if I wanted to play Trigger Man or be kicked in the junk, when I clearly should have chosen to be kicked in the junk. But I think my all-time mea culpa has to go to my incessant, really kind of frothing support of the game Minority Report, which is nothing but 20 hours of tossing men through windows. Granted, that is really, really fun. But I gave that game five stars! That's almost as bad as Steve Thomason giving Billy Hatcher five stars. (Oh, wait. No, it isn't.)

As a final note, I'd like to thank all the readers over the years, and especially the ones I interacted with via email, chats, and reader art. It made the long hours and the stress worthwhile when an envelope came in with a picture of a little blue slime doing something hilarious. And yes, I know that had everything to do with the slime and not me personally, but I still appreciated it. So thanks.

Nate Bihldorff

(1999-2000)
Former Staff Writer

During my time at Power I operated in a constant state of wonder. The 10-year-old kid in me came running to work every day wondering what game he'd get his grubby mitts on. I was reminded of that inner child every month when I worked on Player's Pulse. Back then, communiqués from Nintendo fans came in the mail. Colorful art, some of it unbelievably detailed, covered the envelopes, and though we published some of the best, we could never devote the amount of space they deserved. And the letters themselves ran the gamut from hilarious commentary to earnest devotion to heartbreaking tales of need. I would dig out from under those letters remembering what it felt like to be a kid opening a new Nintendo game, and that was a good thing.

player's pulse

Pardon us if Player's Pulse is sloppy—we're still trying to decide what to call this year. Sure, '99 just rolls of the tongue, but '00? What the heck do you call that! Double-O? All zeroes! Nada! Aught? To be honest, as long as we can stop calling it Y2K, we'll be happy

Some Wicked Ideas

A Truly Freaky Letter

There were occasional not-good things, though. I had barely been at work a month when a kid named Matthew Ball won our 1080° Snowboarding Player's Poll contest, and I, as an avid snowboarder, was chosen to take him and his guests to Whistler. Matthew hadn't snowboarded before, so he and his brand-new Lamar board took some lessons while the friend he'd brought along (who was an experienced rider) and I rode the rest of the mountain.

Eventually we headed back to the bunny hill to check up on Matthew. Just as I spotted Matthew on the chairlift with his instructor (perfect photo op!), his friend caught his front edge and pitched forward. I was in photo mode and we had both been wiping out all over the place, so when he yelled, I didn't think much of it—I told him I'd be right back and went over to snap my chairlift shot.

When I came back, the kid was still lying there. I needed to get the Ski Patrol. There was a sled involved. A hospital. A broken collarbone. My "professional" life flashed before my eyes. As it turned out, everyone was amazingly cool about everything—we did some riding, spent oodles of quarters at the Whistler arcade, Matthew's buddy was incredibly good-natured with his arm in a sling, and I didn't get fired. Lucky me!

Jessica Joffe Stein

([illegible])
Former Supervising Editor

Working on NP was the perfect combination of intellectual and creative challenge, with the opportunity to produce something people couldn't wait to receive.

My fondest memory isn't having Kobe Bryant kiss my hand during a Nintendo Power Sweepstakes winner's postgame visit or editing the Conker's Bad Fur Day strategy guide—though that's definitely right up there. My single fondest memory was also one of my most humbling moments. In 2003, I flew to Ubisoft's studio in Montpellier, France, to interview Michel Ancel about Beyond Good & Evil. As we bantered, Monsieur Ancel started slipping more and more into French in his responses. He was tired of thinking in English. So I finished my interview questions in French, which put him at ease and gave me a wealth of information I might not have gotten otherwise. Sadly, the article I wrote for NP about this awesome experience left out much of that detail. My only hope is that I redeemed myself through countless documented acts of humility in the pages of NP that followed.

NP TALKS WITH MICHEL ANCEL
Rayman and BG&E Creator

Thank you, NP, for the opportunity to work harder than I ever thought I could and for letting me collaborate with a ridiculously talented team that helped millions of kids (and adults!) dream, play, and win. My Wii is on every weekend.

Jason Leung

([illegible])
[illegible] Editor

Shortly after I started writing for the magazine, I somehow became the spokesperson for all of Nintendo's publications and I starred in some videos where I was hawking Nintendo Power and the Official Player's Guides. One infomercial played on a loop on the floor-to-ceiling video wall across from one of the conference rooms at Nintendo of America, so I'd cringe whenever we had a meeting there and my giant head would be visible through the room's window. The video also played at every Nintendo kiosk in every Target in America, and that's probably the most exposure I could ever get away with in that store without getting arrested for exhibitionism. People still claim they remember seeing me in those ads.

Jenni [Villarreal] and I were the pranksters of the Nintendo Power staff, and we'd often do things to mess with the other geeks in the company. Once, we created a poster for a fake band called Orc Factor 5. It was a "rock 'n' role-playing" ORChestra performing at the local renaissance fayre's Yeti Expedition Benefit Concert. They were playing the stage between the leathersmith's tent and Ye Olde Cinnabon Shoppe. We posted it on the bulletin board by the cafeteria, and let's just say several geeks expressed interest in the band's singles, "Pewter Figurine" and "Hobbit (Ye Can't Stop It)." I'm looking at you, Alan.

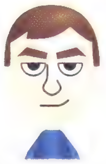
Scott Pelland

([illegible])
Former Managing Editor

Working on Nintendo Power for nearly 20 years gave me many wonderful memories and accomplishments for which I am both grateful and proud. One that stands out was our launch of Final Fantasy for the NES. In the early 1990s, Mr. Arakawa (then president of NOA) was on a mission to increase the popularity of RPGs in North America. When Final Fantasy came to the US, marketing it fell to Nintendo Power, and I was assigned the project. What I cooked up was the Summer of Final Fantasy, several months of major reveals and contests leading up to the release of the game. We gave away crystal balls, special controller skins, suits of armor, and a Final Fantasy adventure in the Caribbean. That coverage and Nintendo Power's readers set the ball rolling on one of gaming's greatest success stories.

Along with the good experiences came the bad: Virtual Boy. Several members of the NP staff, in fact, had to be excused from working on Virtual Boy titles because playing the system made them nauseous. So promoting Virtual Boy and its games in the magazine was difficult. It was our job to cover Virtual Boy, but it was not a pleasure. It was one of the few times that I felt we were promoting a truly bad product, inasmuch as any product that makes you vomit is probably bad.

STRATEGY
NINTENDO POWER
GUIDE
FINAL FANTASY
Nintendo



Chris Shepperd

([illegible])
Former [illegible] Editor

I worked on dozens of Nintendo Power issues over about eight years with the magazine, and it's not my strong suit to pick out my favorite moments; those come and go. But I clearly remember the collective sense of pride when a freshly printed issue would land on our desks and we'd all take time to read the articles. Since we were usually working on our own stuff throughout each month, it was often the first time we got to see what everyone else had written. A few hundred thousand people might read your cover story, but there's nothing like defending to your peers what you wrote. It made me a better writer, a more-critical observer, and more capable of accepting criticism of my work. It was evident from watching the changes in the industry that Nintendo Power wasn't going to be around forever; but these moments stuck with me.

I'm supposed to write a mea culpa here, but given that for about two years I was blamed for virtually everything that went wrong with the magazine, that would take a while. And of course it was really all Chris Hoffman's fault. I should probably apologize for giving Super Mario Galaxy a 9.5 instead of a 10 (I won't) or spoiling the best moments of Resident Evil 4 for Steve T. (nope). Instead I'll take the blame for there not being a sequel to Beyond Good & Evil yet—for the amount of love I gave that game in NP over the years, I feel a karmic burden that a new game hasn't been released. Or maybe the lack of a Beyond Good & Evil sequel is why Nintendo Power is going away; in that case I'm off the hook...I think.

Chris Slate
(2007-2011)
Former Editor in Chief

The anniversary issues were the most fun to create, and are the ones that I'm most proud of. I relished the chance to dig into Nintendo history and pull out my favorite moments to share with everyone else; it was a way to pay tribute to the games and creators that had entertained and inspired me. There was the 20th-anniversary issue (Vol. 231), for which we chose our top 20 games for each Nintendo system. On the newsstand it came wrapped in our best-ever polybag, a foil wrapper that featured Nintendo's most beloved characters. Our 250th issue included both my favorite NP cover (Mario surrounded by a ton of tiny nostalgic Nintendo images) and my favorite feature, a fun, scattershot look at pretty much everything we love about Nintendo, from classic characters to masterful mustaches. Then there was our NES 25th-anniversary issue (Vol. 260), which gave me the chance to put my all-time favorite box art, the Raccoon Mario illustration from Super Mario Bros. 3, on the cover. To me, the magic of the magazine always lay more in the shared history and passions of its readership than in the news, previews, or reviews of any particular month.

20TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!
NINTENDO POWER
FREE POSTER INSIDE!
OUR BEST ISSUE OF THE YEAR!

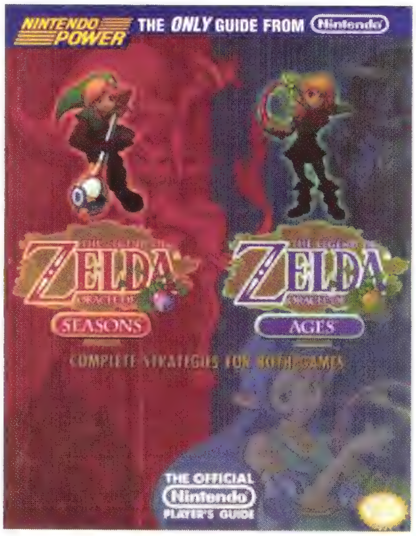
On the flip side, the standalone newsstand specials were always a challenge to conceive and create during our already-busy monthly grind. Although many of them were quite good, a few (cough—2009 Summer Game Guide) were, uh, not so good. But as I look back at my five years at NP, I'm happy to say that for every miss there were many more hits, and I got to geek out every day with a group of amazing guys who loved Nintendo gaming just as much as I did.

Jenni Villarreal
(1999-2004)
Former Staff Writer

There are so many things I'm proud of from my time at Nintendo Power.

One of the most challenging things I did at NP was writing the Legend of Zelda: Oracle of Ages and Oracle of Seasons guide with Jason. We didn't have an English build of the games until it was time to fact-check. So we played both games in Japanese, and I learned a tiny amount of kanji (long since forgotten) to read the menu items. Then we had to play through the games again superfast in English to check our work against the book we'd written. I was the first person at Nintendo of America to get all 120 Shine Sprites in Super Mario Sunshine, which was way easier than playing a Zelda game in Japanese on a deadline.

When we were working late, Jason and I liked to play stupid pranks. Our best was on Drew Williams.


NINTENDO POWER
THE ONLY GUIDE FROM Nintendo
THE LEGEND OF ZELDA
ORACLE OF SEASONS
THE LEGEND OF ZELDA
ORACLE OF AGES
COMPLETE STRATEGIES FOR BOTH GAMES
THE OFFICIAL Nintendo PLAYER'S GUIDE

He said he'd drink frosted pee and eat poop if the entire staff got Wide-Boy64s (N64-shaped carts that allowed you to play Game Boy/GBA games on your N64) for their desks. Well, we did. So for a week, we served Drew lemonade and poop-shaped foods (a slightly melted Baby Ruth, black beans piped from a tube, a hot-dog-shaped hamburger sans bun, etc.) because I guess we can't let things go. Don't you wish you'd gotten to work with us?

I was the person who suggested to Alan Averill that he use the blue slime from Dragon Warrior as his avatar in the magazine, then later did a little feature about him in Player's Pulse. Frankly, I created a monster.

I tried my best in the Classified Information code section to explain the complicated series of button pushes that unlocked all the stuff in GoldenEye 007, but to this day, some people think we published bum codes. We didn't! It was just super, super hard to enter the codes correctly and I guess my explanation was lacking. Whoops.

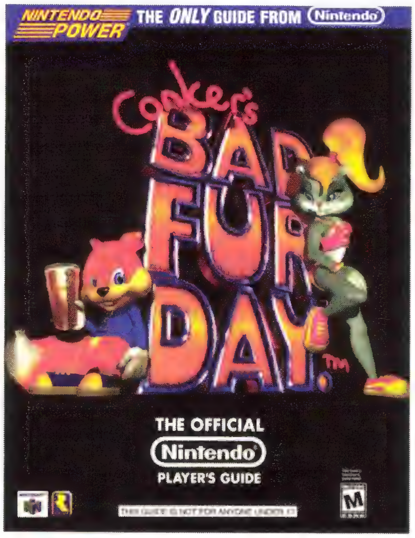
Drew Williams
(1999-2002, 2006-2007)
Former Senior Editor/Writer

My favorite project while at Power—by a huge margin—was the Conker's Bad Fur Day Official Player's Guide. Nothing about BFD appeared in the magazine when the game was on store shelves. It was too hot for Degrassi Junior High.

Nintendo pinched its nose and held the game at arm's length. A totally understandable reaction. A whole level was made of poop. A boss was made of poop. His teeth were undigested corn kernels, and he sang a little song about poop. Many of the other characters were either alcoholic or mentally ill. One of the trickiest tasks in the game involved manipulating Conker's urine stream.

Because the company didn't have high expectations for the game, we were left to our own devices. We elected to make the guide aggressively weird. It was designed to be a guide-within-a-guide that represented Conker's "manual" from the game. Our designers outdid themselves by providing an insane amount of detail: each page was crammed with unsettling images. In the end, the guide was wrapped in plastic like airport porn, and we must've sold several dozen copies. I always wondered if anyone understood the love we poured into that book. The sweet love from the pros at Nintendo Power. Long live Nintendo Power.

My great shame was that I helped to perpetuate the Counselor's Corner sham for several years. The truth can now be told: There was no counselor. No corner. It was just me pulling gameplay tips out of my butt and lofting them at our gentle readers. I'm sorry. It was a lot of fun.


NINTENDO POWER
THE ONLY GUIDE FROM Nintendo
Conker's BAD FUR DAY.
THE OFFICIAL Nintendo PLAYER'S GUIDE
M

Nitronic Rush (DigiPen student game)
Winner, Gamer's Choice Award, Indie Game Challenge 2012

THANK YOU, NINTENDO POWER.

For nearly two decades, DigiPen has taught thousands of gamers, artists, and engineers to explore the art and science of video game development - and Nintendo Power has been instrumental in helping us spread our message. To the magazine that has helped inspire countless Nintendo fans to become game creators themselves, we want to say "thanks." And to the bright young minds who are ready to look at games in a whole new light, your adventure has just begun.

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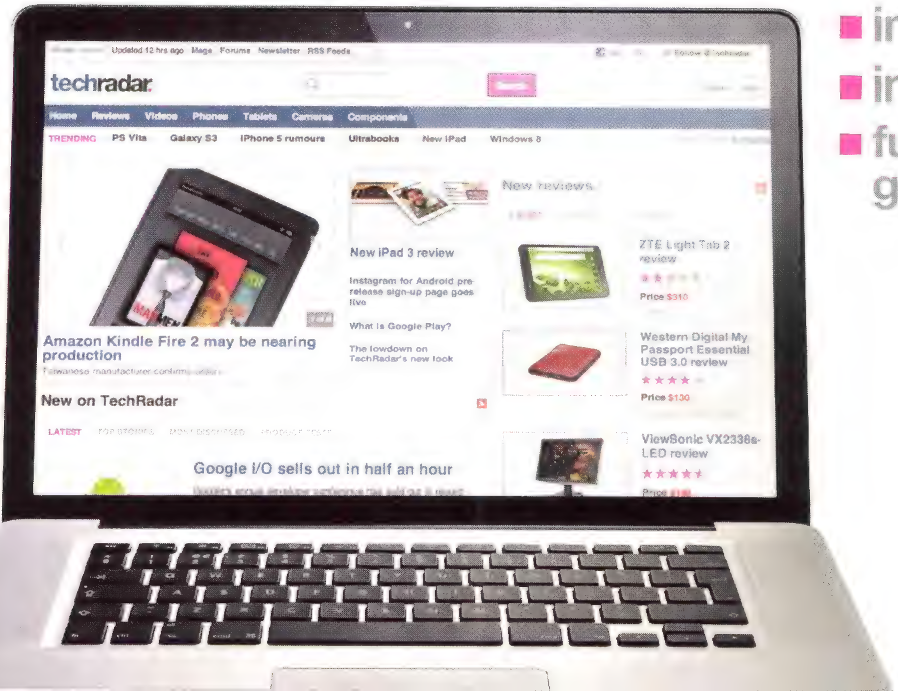
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Future

REVIEWS

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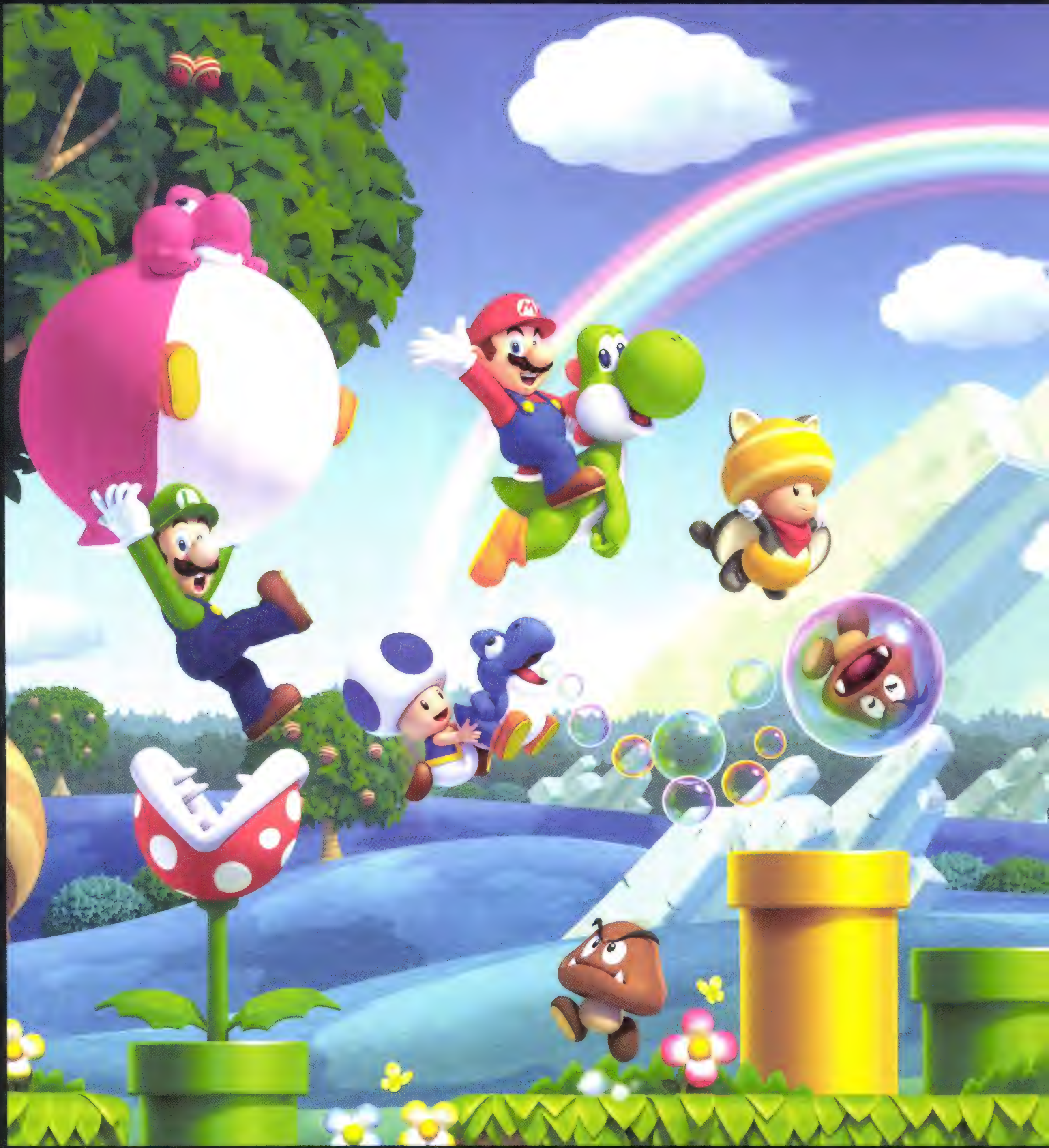


Wii U is here! Mario, Luigi, and friends get a little squirrelly and celebrate the launch of Nintendo's latest system in style with their latest multiplayer adventure, New Super Mario Bros. U.

Give Me a Boost

NEW SUPER MARIO BROS. U

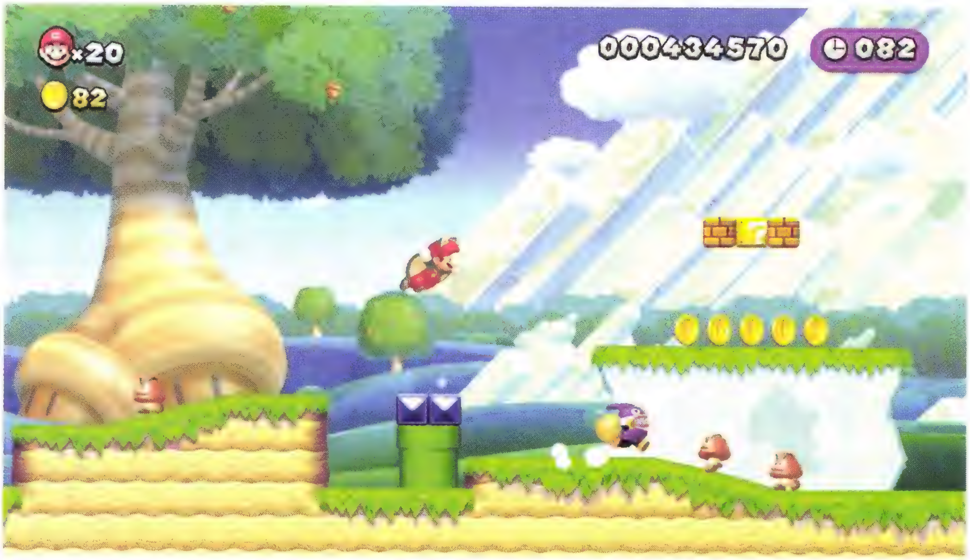
8.0

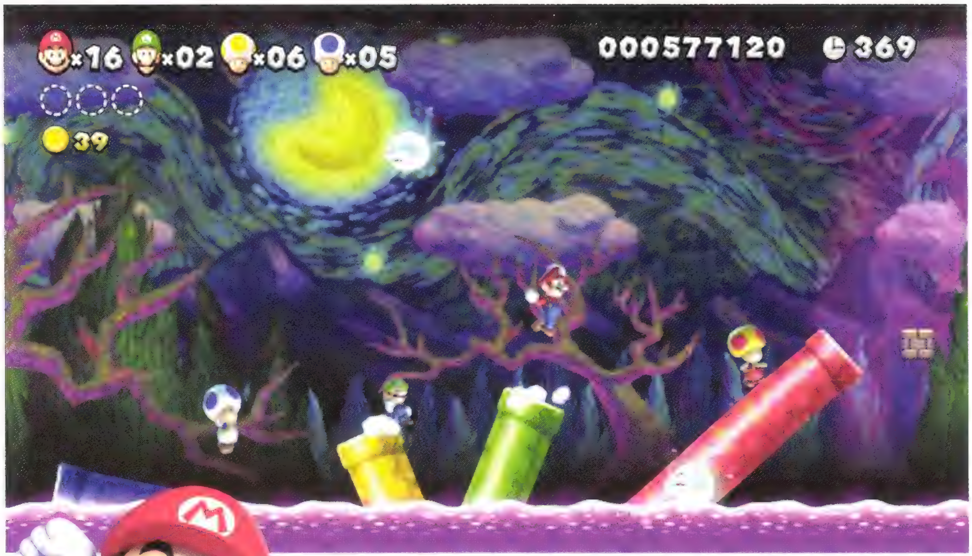
It's hard to believe that we haven't had a Nintendo home-console launch with a new Mario platformer since the release of the Nintendo 64 way back in 1996. Thankfully Wii U is launching with New Super Mario Bros. U. As you'd expect, it is just as polished as the other recent Mario games and benefits greatly from the Wii U console's high definition capabilities. The Mushroom Kingdom has never looked sharper.

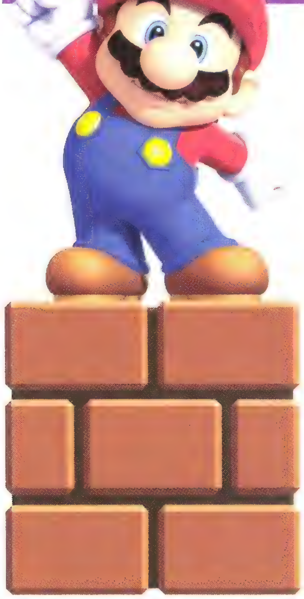
A new Mario platforming adventure usually means a never-before-seen power-up that helps give the game its own identity. In NSMBU, we get the Super Acorn, which transforms our hero into Flying Squirrel Mario. This multipurpose outfit allows Mario to glide, cling to walls, and do a handy midair jump. It's one of the most enjoyable Mario suits in some time, and hopefully it becomes as ubiquitous as the Fire Mario and Raccoon Mario outfits.

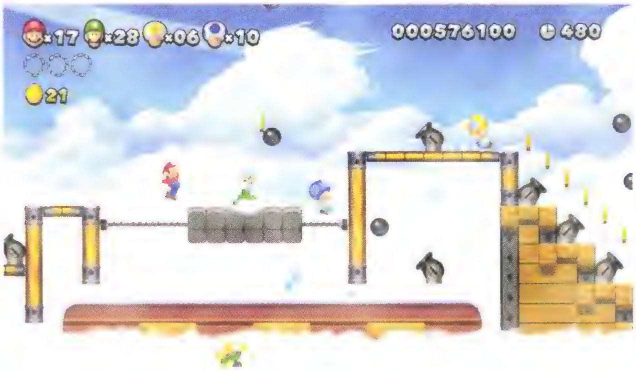
A snazzy new suit would be of limited use without lots of levels to traverse, and NSMBU is no slouch in that regard. The stages are fun and chock-full of secret areas, but they may feel overly familiar if you've played the other entries in the New Super Mario Bros. series. There are moments of brilliance—a level in which you're constantly chased by a long dragon-eel creature is surprisingly tense, and stages that have you running on snaking blocks across bottomless voids are exciting tests of your reflexes. A few other levels require you to tilt the Wii U GamePad to move platforms back and forth, which is also a welcome challenge. It's just unfortunate that such novel designs are few and far between.

The environments that comprise the Mushroom Kingdom are Mario standards—a grass world, a snow world, a water world, etc. The graphic style is the same that we've seen for a while now. However, right in the middle of the Soda Jungle world is a stage inspired by Vincent van Gogh's famous painting "The Starry Night." The swirling backgrounds and vivid colors of this level are simply beautiful, and made me long for an entire Mario game with a more experimental art style.







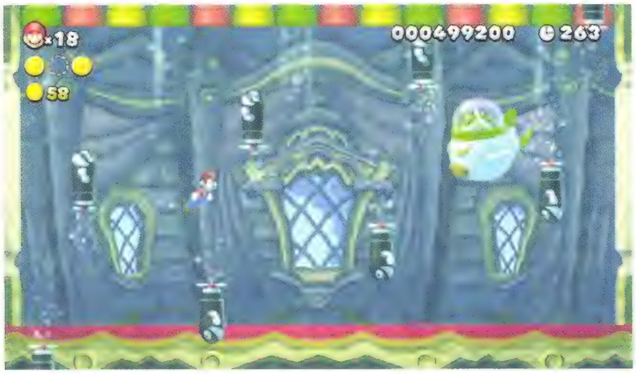


Although it's not an overly difficult game, NSMBU does provide a decent challenge, especially in the later levels. The action culminates in one of the most exciting final boss fights the Mario series has seen in some time. It's not a terribly complex battle, but it's fun to play.

Things get substantially more complicated if you strive to collect all of the (sometimes deviously hidden) Star Coins and discover all of the secret areas. Taking the time to find everything is certainly worth your while; collecting the requisite number unlocks new levels to extend the game experience.

There's also a trio of unique diversions that add replay value. The objective-based Challenge mode, the auto-scrolling Boost Rush mode, and the gold-gathering Coin Battle mode offer bite-sized amusement for you and a bunch of friends. Of course, multiple players can also join in the main story, which allows for four characters to run around the screen at once. However, that multiplayer functionality is more of a novelty than anything else—players constantly bump into each other and cause each other to plummet into pits or lava pools. The action gets less frantic with fewer people, but solo play is still the best. The new Boost Mode multiplayer game is substantially more enjoyable (though more suited to casual play). Here, one player taps the screen on the Wii U GamePad to create platforms—allowing the other players to reach out-of-the-way areas—or to momentarily stun enemies.

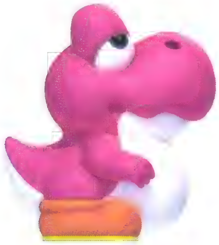
New Super Mario Bros. U may not be the most innovative Mario platformer, but it's incredibly polished and a lot of fun. Plus, there's something about breaking in a new Nintendo console with a Mario game that just feels right. —**PHIL T.**



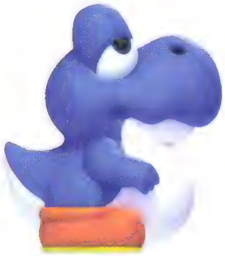
WII U PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **NINTENDO**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

CHOOSE YOUR YOSHI

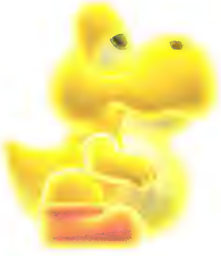
Everyone's favorite egg-laying buddy, Yoshi, returns for New Super Mario Bros. U, and a trio of diminutive Baby Yoshis joins the little green guy. When Mario carries them, they lend him their special powers. Keep an eye out for these helpful sidekicks to gain an edge on Bowser and his Koopa army.



BALLOON BABY YOSHI If you need a little more hang time, look to this pink Baby Yoshi, capable of blowing himself up to slow your descent.



BUBBLE BABY YOSHI The blue fellow spits out bubbles that capture enemies and turn them into coins.



BULB BABY YOSHI Especially handy in dark areas, our glowing yellow friend emits a gentle light that intensifies when he's shaken.

WRITERS' BLOCK

IF YOU HADN'T BEEN AT NP, WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE BEEN DOING FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS?

JUSTIN CHENG

I probably would have stayed at PSM, which became PlayStation: The Official Magazine, and would still be facing unemployment, as that magazine also folded.

CHRIS HOFFMAN

I'd either have been upgraded to a fighting robot to protect the world from evil or moved to Canada and learned to ride a moose.

CODY MARTIN

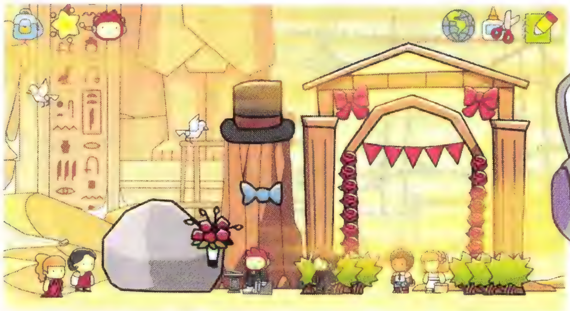
I might have interned at a significantly less cool magazine or continued feeding my MMO addiction. Either way, I definitely would've led a life of crime as a young rapscallion under the alias "Codemaster."

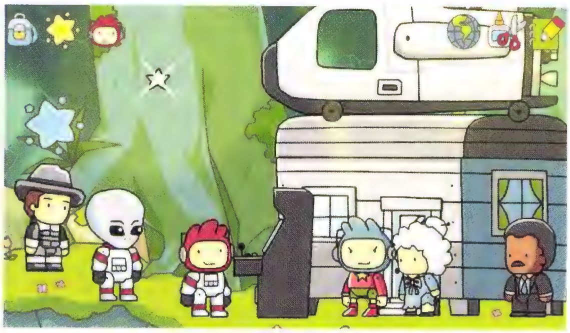
PHIL THEOBALD

Well, I *did* get my teaching credential a few years ago, so I would probably be figuring out how to incorporate Nintendo 3DS systems as a viable teaching tool in classrooms.

STEVE THOMASON

I'd like to say I'd be running the Minnesota Twins, but it's more likely I would have ended up wandering the streets and rambling incoherently about hedgehogs.





Unlimited Potential

SCRIBBLENAUTS UNLIMITED

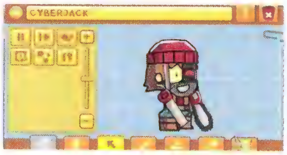
8.0

If nothing else, the Wii U version of Scribblenauts Unlimited lives up its name. Thanks to the amazingly robust object editor, this game is the ultimate sandbox; you can truly create anything you want, whether it's some ridiculous invention—say, a flatulent, orange-juice spewing tractor with a rhinoceros head—or simply something that didn't make it into the game's massive premade dictionary (cat poop, for example). The interface isn't entirely intuitive, but creative gamers will nonetheless be likely to spend hours and hours customizing their objects' appearances and AI before sharing them online.

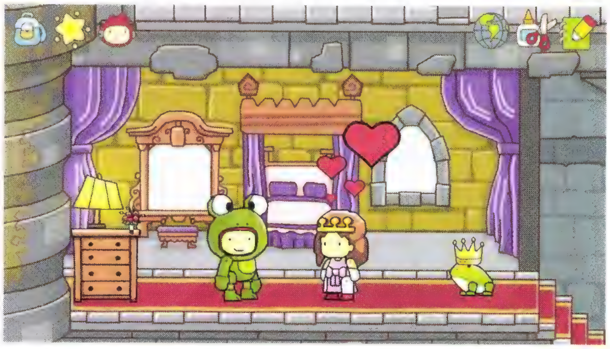
As far as gameplay goes, Scribblenauts Unlimited isn't terribly different from its predecessors. The puzzle-oriented action feels less challenging and more casual this time out, but the basic premise of writing nouns and adjectives to create and modify objects to solve myriad scenarios remains quite fun—especially when you attempt to come up with the most bizarre solutions possible. The new open-world structure and varied environments add appeal, as does the inclusion of Nintendo-themed content (even though it isn't very interactive). The game does have some rough edges, however. The controls are mildly clunky (even simple actions often require multiple menu taps), and the optional button-based controls are even more unwieldy. In fact, considering the touch-screen nature of the game, the only reason to play it on the TV instead of using just the Wii U GamePad is if friends are watching. Also, it's still easy to fail complex tasks by defying some unexplained parameter.

Despite feeling less groundbreaking with each installment, the Scribblenauts titles continue to provide hours of entertainment; this entry is especially worthwhile if you haven't experienced the series's unique charms before.

—**CHRIS H.**



[Above] With the object editor, you, too, can make your very own cyborg lumberjack.



Wii U
PUBLISHER: **WARNER BROS. INTERACTIVE**
DEVELOPER: **5TH CELL**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

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Nintendo Land is at its best when you're playing the attractions with friends.

Amuse Mii

NINTENDO LAND

7.0 Intended as a colorful and welcoming invitation for new Wii U owners, Nintendo Land succeeds as a broadly enjoyable tutorial on the myriad features and abilities of the console and its unique GamePad controller. With 12 core attractions based on classic Nintendo franchises, the collection offers a little something for everyone while imparting a distinctly original play experience.

Nintendo Land takes the shape of a vibrant, Mii character-packed theme park, which offers its dozen attractions in different flavors. Half of the activities are intended for only a single player, including Captain Falcon's Twister Race (based on F-Zero), in which you rotate the GamePad to guide the Captain's speeding ship around an obstacle-filled course from overhead. Another standout, Takamaru's Ninja Castle, has you slide virtual throwing stars from the GamePad to the TV screen to cut down various foes.

Multiplayer is really where Nintendo Land comes alive, though. Team Attractions are playable individually, but all support up to four or five players—one using the GamePad and the rest brandishing Wii Remote controllers. In The Legend of Zelda: Battle Quest, for example, the team works together to clear stages of enemies, with the GamePad-wielder as an archer and the others as swordsmen. Each Team Attraction features multiple play variations and numerous stages to work through, giving them more depth than the quick-hit games seen in many other multi-event compilations.

The three multiplayer-only Competitive Attractions, meanwhile, showcase the system's asymmetric play approach, with one GamePad-equipped contestant facing the rest. Mario Chase sees four players pursuing the portly plumber around a course, whereas Luigi's Ghost Mansion pits up to four flashlight-holders against a roaming spectre. Although the asymmetric games utilize similar themes and prove pretty simplistic, it's fun to trade off between the GamePad and the Wii Remote between rounds to experience different styles of play.

Slick presentation makes Nintendo Land a pleasure to look at on both an HDTV and the GamePad screen; there are glossy candy-colored surroundings and fantastic Mii costumes based on beloved characters. As a pack-in for the Wii U Deluxe Set, Nintendo Land is a slight but entertaining set of diversions; it's a tougher sell as a $60 add-on for Basic Set buyers. We wish that, like Wii Sports before it, this game were included with all versions of the new console; early Wii U adopters would have benefitted from such an accessible initial play experience.

—ANDREW H.

Wii U PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **NINTENDO**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

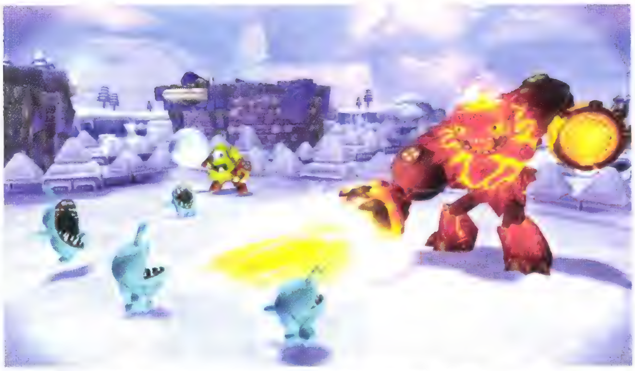
0:57
Very close!

Bigger and Better

SKYLANDERS GIANTS

8.0 Last issue I extolled the virtues of the Wii version of Skylanders Giants; suffice it to say that I liked it quite a bit, as I scored it an 8.0. All of the things I enjoyed about the Wii title—the new characters (including the Giants), the new figurines (the LightCore ones are especially cool), and the new minigames (door-unlocking puzzles and Skystones)—are equally good here. What makes this edition of Skylanders Giants the best one are the high-definition graphics and the GamePad functionality. The former is a given; as for the latter, not only do you get to see your Skylander's stats on the touch screen, but you can also see every objective for the level, so you don't have to pause to track your progress. It's a relatively small addition, but one that I found to be pretty darn handy. —**JUSTIN C.**

Wii U PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**
DEVELOPER: **VICARIOUS VISIONS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**



Why are Giants cool? Because not only can they grant you access to elemental zones, but they can also open up Giants-only areas. Plus, they're huge.

Lazing Lagomorphs

RABBIDS LAND

5.0 Amusement-park-themed party games are all the rage in the Wii U launch lineup, it seems, but Rabbids Land actually hews more closely to Mario Party in execution. Up to four players can take part in the board-game-based showdown, with each player participating in minigames and answering simple trivia questions to be the first to amass the requisite amount of trophies and reach the center circle. The minigames utilize the GamePad controller's screen for activities like steering a wakeboard and matching pairs of underwear, and a second player uses a Wii Remote and Nunchuk on the TV. Rabbids Land is tepid in single-player, but unlike Nintendo Land, it doesn't perk up much in multiplayer. Although a few of the silly minigames are clever, none are as interesting or robust as those in Nintendo's offering. The Rabbids still amuse with their antics, but their first Wii U effort fails to consistently entertain.
—**ANDREW H.**

The Rabbids were charming at first, but their appeal has worn a little thin over the years.

Wii U PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**
DEVELOPER: **UBISOFT PARIS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Stupid Name, Awesome Game

ZOMBIU

9.0 I've been waiting years for someone to make ZombiU. Not this specific game, of course, but one that pushes the survival-horror genre to such extremes that you essentially end up with a zombie-apocalypse simulator. Ubisoft has finally satisfied that craving with aplomb, delivering what I consider the standout title of the Wii U launch.

Let's be perfectly clear: if you're seeking an archetypal first-person shooter filled with fast-paced action, over-the-top set pieces, and flashy explosions, you're not going to find it here. ZombiU is slow and methodical, designed to build tension rather than pump adrenaline. As you explore its expansive London settings, you'll need to scour every nook and cranny for scarce provisions and proceed around every corner with the utmost caution. You see, a single bite from one of the ravenous undead spells the end for your protagonist. You'll then assume control of a new survivor, but you'll start back at the safe house (the game's hub), and in order to reacquire whatever supplies you were carrying, you'll need to hunt down the newly zombified version of your previous character.

As you might imagine, that makes for a pretty stiff challenge. It almost never feels unfair, though, because the game is

[Right] That zombie certainly got an eyeful. "See" what we did there?

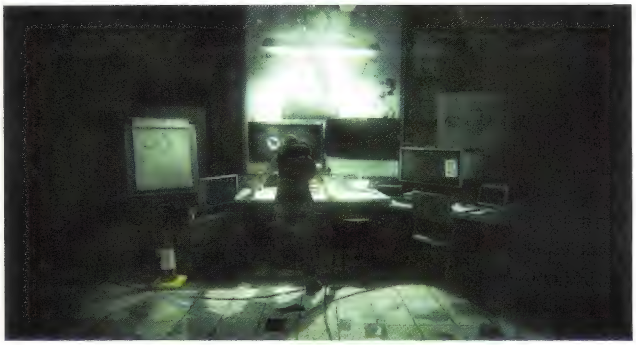
PIMPIN' AIN'T EASY

Your first three protagonists in ZombiU are all preset, but the game randomly generates the characteristics of subsequent survivors. That includes name, sex, appearance, and occupation. None of these things have any bearing on gameplay, but they can make for some amusing circumstances. For example, my longest-surviving character was an overweight pimp named Leon Green. He lasted nearly five hours in London's post-apocalyptic hellscape before clumsily falling off a catwalk and plunging to his death.

Pro-tip: It's generally not a good idea to let the zombies get this close.

incredibly disciplined about following its own rules. There's a reliable consistency to this world, and if you kick the bucket, it's very likely because you got careless or impatient. That's a crucial element of ZombiU's success, allowing it to deftly walk that tightrope between tension and frustration.

At the same time, the game manages to offer plenty of surprises. It spaces them out perfectly, too; after leaving your nerves frayed with some horrifying new wrinkle, it'll ease off the throttle for a bit and allow you to catch your breath. ZombiU's pacing on the whole is superb, which is especially impressive given the scope of the adventure. Judicious players will spend upwards of 15 hours reaching its conclusion—significantly more than you might expect from a launch title.

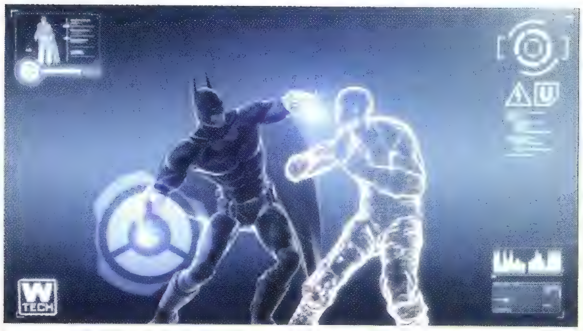


Speaking of which, none of the games available for Wii U on day one better showcase the system's unique controller. ZombiU takes advantage of the GamePad in all sorts of cool ways, from serving as a black-light scanner to providing sonar that warns of nearby movement. My favorite example: you'll use the touch screen to pick locks, remove items from your backpack, and more while events continue to unfold on the television (via a strategically chosen third-person perspective for maximum anxiety). Add it all up, and you've got an experience that wouldn't be nearly as compelling with a traditional controller.

Alongside the single-player campaign is a local two-player mode that would be impossible without the GamePad. As the "King of Zombies," one person uses that controller's touch screen to dispatch different types of the undead while another tries to mow them down via a Wii U Pro Controller or Wii Remote and Nunchuk. For the GamePad player this mode feels a bit like a real-time strategy game, while his opponent experiences something akin to a traditional first-person shooter. It's an interesting idea and a fun little diversion, though definitely a side dish to the story mode's main course.

Fortunately, that course is plenty satisfying. I do have a few minor quibbles—certain rooms and textures repeat too often and your sole melee weapon (a cricket bat) is ridiculously underpowered—but they pale in comparison to everything the game gets right. This is the rare launch title whose triumph isn't contingent on the fact that it's a launch title. Hopefully that's rewarded at the cash register, because I'd love to see a sequel with online co-op play. **—STEVE T.**

Wii U PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**
DEVELOPER: **UBISOFT MONTPELLIER**
ESRB: **MATURE**



[Above] The Battle Armored Tech (B.A.T.) lets Batman harness energy from hitting enemies to temporarily become more powerful.

The Dark Knight Rises

BATMAN: ARKHAM CITY—ARMORED EDITION

9.0 Every once in a while, a game comes along that defies the odds. In this case it's the odds of a comic book being turned into a truly exceptional interactive experience. Batman: Arkham City–Armored Edition sets a new bar, not just for comic-book adaptations, but for games in general.

The Dark Knight has been thrown into a superprison located smack-dab in the middle of Gotham City. To escape, you'll need to punch, kick, and Batarang your way through a rogue's gallery that includes the Joker, Two-Face, and Mr. Freeze, and use the Caped Crusader's entire arsenal of gadgets and detective skills as well. Batman's not alone in this adventure, however: you also assume the role of Catwoman, who has her own set of moves, skills, and objectives.

Exploring the open world of Arkham City at street level or along its rooftops is thrilling, and the fighting is extremely fluid and visceral. Hacking, sending off remote-control Batarangs, and employing other gadgets make excellent use of the Wii U GamePad controller, as do the ever-present world map, inventory, and other data. This is a game that seems tailor-made for Nintendo's new system.

In addition to the fantastic touch-screen mechanics, Arkham City has been enhanced for Wii U with new armor for Batman that lets you store energy earned by hitting enemies and use it to power up your attacks. This version of the game also comes standard with all the downloadable content released for other consoles' iterations, such as alternate player skins and Harley Quinn's Revenge, a story add-on.

Of course, if you've already played Arkham City and its DLC, Armored Edition doesn't offer a real reason to return to Gotham. If you haven't, though, you're in for a rare can't-miss treat that's sure to blow away any Bat-fan. —**RANDY N.**

WII U PUBLISHER: **WARNER BROS. INTERACTIVE**
DEVELOPER: **WB GAMES MONTREAL**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Anyone ever you that you're full of surprises?

x5
Joker Radio Signal Strength
MAX
95m
MIN

You might know **Joshua**. He loves video games, and he owns enough to know they're not all meant for kids. That's why he reminds his friends (at least the ones that have kids) that they all have big black letters on the box to help parents find the ones that are best for their families.

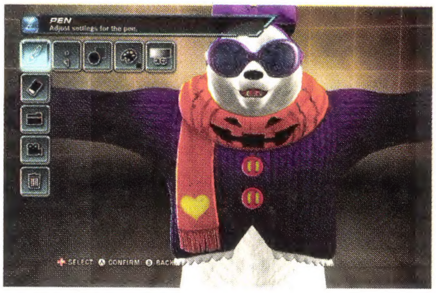
You can learn about those ratings at **ESRB.org**

Los Angeles, CA

ESRB
ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE
RATING BOARD

EARLY CHILDHOOD eC CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
EVERYONE 10+ E 10+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
MATURE 17+ M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
ADULTS ONLY 18+ AO CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Truly Tekken

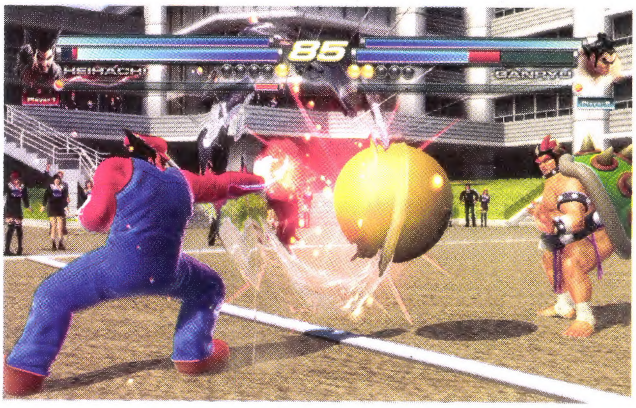


TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT 2 Wii U EDITION

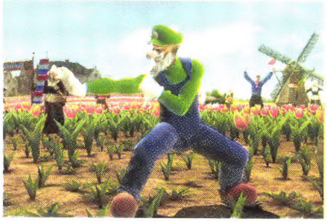
8.0

Tekken doesn't have a whole lot of history with Nintendo platforms, but I've enjoyed every version of the King of Iron Fist Tournament that has graced those systems. Unfortunately, neither Tekken Advance nor Tekken 3D Prime Edition offered the true Tekken experience. But Tekken Tag Tournament 2 Wii U Edition does—and then some. This version of Namco Bandai's tag-team fighting game has even more content than its already-released-on-other-consoles siblings. You get modes such as Mushroom Battle and Tekken Ball, Nintendo-character-themed costumes, and the ability to draw on your character via the stylus. Furthermore, you can assign combos to the GamePad controller's touch screen, à la Tekken 3D Prime Edition.

These features are certainly nice additions—especially for fans who decided to wait for this version of Tekken Tag Tournament 2—but they don't necessarily make the game a must-buy. Ultimately, you still have to enjoy the signature fighting system (in which the controller's four face buttons correspond to the combatants' limbs), the wacky characters (including robots, supernatural beings, and zoo animals), and the nonsensical story (which is so convoluted that it's nigh impossible to summarize). This game is pretty much the definitive Tekken experience, encapsulating everything the series is about—for better or for worse, depending on how you feel about the nearly two-decades-old franchise. Personally, I adore all of its gameplay, character, and story stuff, which is why it's easy for me to give Tekken Tag Tournament 2 Wii U Edition my stamp of approval. —**JUSTIN C.**



[Above] Where else can you see the head of a multinational conglomerate dressed as Mario play ball with a sumo wrestler dressed as Bowser?



Wii U PUBLISHER: **NAMCO BANDAI**
DEVELOPER: **NAMCO BANDAI**
ESRB: **TEEN**

This is **Richard**. He knows it's his job to teach his son **Scotty** what this whole gaming thing is about. The age rating helps him **pick the right games**, but being a good dad means he always wants to know more.

That's exactly what the **ESRB's rating summaries** are for.

Search for a game's rating summary at **ESRB.org**.

Rich H.
Lafayette, IN

ESRB
ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE
RATING BOARD

EARLY CHILDHOOD eC CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
EVERYONE 10+ E 10+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
MATURE 17+ M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
ADULTS ONLY 18+ AO CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

[Below] Courses based on Sega classics like After Burner will have retro fans feeling nostalgic.

Racing Legends

SONIC & ALL-STARS RACING TRANSFORMED

8.0 Building on the solid foundation laid down by Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing, Transformed stays true to its name by introducing flying and aquatic portions to many of its tracks based on classic Sega franchises. When passing through special gates, your car will morph into a plane or boat, which changes the feel of the competition a bit—but sometimes not for the best. Thankfully, the majority of the racing remains on the track, where it excels.

As we had hoped, this sequel has more of everything we liked about its predecessor. There are more Sega stars (plus folks like Wreck-It Ralph and the somewhat-out-of-place Danica Patrick) to race as, and more courses based on Sega's games (from Panzer Dragoon to Golden Axe) to race on.

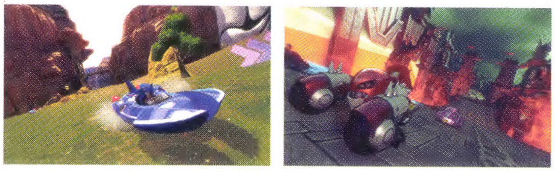
The track design is excellent, and the various vehicles control very well. The power-ups and weapons, essential to a combat racer, could've definitely used a little more thought, though. They're really not that special, which seems odd given the various series available to draw from and the personality the rest of the game exudes.

Multiplayer in Transformed gets special recognition since it's such an integral part of the experience. Up to five players can race at once, with one person getting his own view on the GamePad. It's a shame the video quality on this dedicated display is so inexplicably grainy, though.

Added up, Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed is a total blast in the spirit of Sega's beloved arcade racing titles. It offers plenty of replayability, and is lots of fun for solo and party play alike. If you're a fan of Sega classics or just looking for a really fun racer, you'll want to get behind the wheel.

—RANDY N.

Wii U PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **SUMO DIGITAL**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**



The boating and flying portions of the game aren't as strong as the driving parts, but there are fewer of them.